

THROUGH CENTRAL ASIA

WITH A MAP AND APPENDIX ON THE

*DIPLOMACY AND DELIMITATION OF THE
RUSSO-AFGHAN FRONTIER*

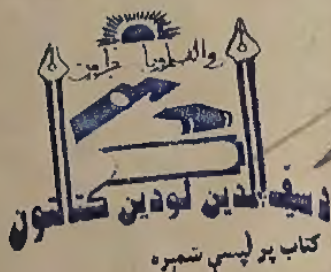
Henry Lansdell

BY

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KHIVA AND MERV"



With love & good wish

WITH SEVENTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS

*from his old friend
Mrs Layard*

London

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, AND RIVINGTON
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1887

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* * Most of these have been engraved from the Author's photographs, and have appeared in the pages of the "Graphic," "Leisure Hour," and "Sunday at Home."

OBSERVANDA.

IN proper names the letters should be pronounced as follows:—
a as in *father*; *e* as in *there*; *i* as in *ravine*; *o* as in *go*; *u* as in *lunar*; and the diphthongs *ai* and *ei* as *i* in *hide*. The consonants are pronounced as in English, save that *kh* is guttural, as *ch* in the Scotch *loch*.

Unless otherwise stated:—

1. The dates are given according to English reckoning, being in advance of the Russian by twelve days.

2. English weights and measures are to be understood.

3. Degrees of temperature are expressed according to the scale or Fahrenheit.

The ordinary paper rouble is reckoned at two shillings, its value at the time of the Author's visit; but before the Russo-Turkish war in 1877, it was worth between half a-crown and three shillings.

The Russian paper rouble (or 100 kopecks) equals 2 shillings English.

„	silver	„	3	„	„
„	vershok	„	1·75	inches	„
„	arshin	„	28	inches	„
„	sajen	„	7	feet	„
„	verst (500 sajens)	„	·663	mile	„
„	desiatin (2,400 sq. sajens)	„	2·86	acres	„
„	sq. verst	„	·43949	sq. mile.	
„	zolotnik (96 dols)	equals 2·41 drams avoirdupois.			
„	pound	„	14·43	ounces.	
„	pood	„	36	lbs.	
„	garnet	„	·34	peck.	
„	vedro	„	2·7	Imperial gallons,	or
				3·25	gallons of wine.
„	chetvert	„	·72	quarter.	

THROUGH CENTRAL ASIA.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

Intention to cross the Steppe frustrated in 1879.—Considered afresh in 1882.—Distribution of religious literature desirable.—Reasons for and against the venture.—The way cleared.—My objects chiefly religious.—Help of Bible and Tract Societies.—Plans in relation thereto.—Additional objects.—Failure anticipated by some.—Fears entertained by others.—The start.

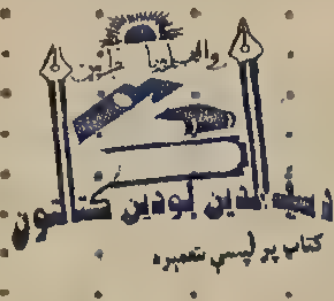
WHEN passing through Ekaterineburg in 1879 I heard of a people in the south, wandering about in so primitive a condition with their flocks and herds, that, when among them, one might fancy himself on a visit to the Hebrew patriarchs. This so far interested me that I determined, on my way back, to pass through the Kirghese country from Omsk to Orenburg. But I was prevented from doing this by journeying all across Asia, and making a circuit of the world. Once more safe home, so far was it from my wish to travel extensively again, that I had asked my friends to look out for me a suitable sphere of parish work.

My Siberian experience, however, had fostered in my mind another idea, which, on the Pacific, came to maturity. I had taken notes to serve possibly for public correspondence, or for a book, and during the voyage between Japan and San Francisco, I read my experiences to some of my fellow-passengers in

the saloon. Among these evening audiences was Sir Harry Parkes, K.C.B., then our Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Japan, who, seeing that my story was so different from that commonly believed respecting Siberia, thought that such testimony, if published, might do something towards softening the asperity which then existed between England and Russia, and his Excellency further reminded me that there are important means of doing good, and many "missions" in life, other than those of our religious societies. This thought reconciled me, on my return, to the expenditure of the inside of many weeks in writing my book, whilst on Sundays I officiated at a neighbouring church. When the book was finished, I was invited to the pastoral charge of a contemplated parochial district, and whilst this was under consideration, I was pounced upon to be editor in a proposed religious literary undertaking. Thus 1882 dawned upon me, seemingly, with an open door on either hand, whilst the desire to journey through Central Asia was smouldering within me. Neither the pastoral nor the literary undertaking was carried out, and it then remained for me to consider whether I should go to Central Asia.

I gave a day to weighing the question, and, taking the Russian kalendar and the post-book, elicited from them that a traveller passing from Orenburg by the post-road round Russian Central Asia (without entering Kuldja, Bokhara, or Khiva) would traverse eight provinces, with a total population of 4,908,000,* and

* Uralsk	355,000
Turgaisk	636,000
Akmolinsk	382,000
Semipolatinsk	603,000
Syr-Daria	1,255,000
Semirechia	541,000
Ferghana	964,000
Zarafshan	172,000
	<hr/>
	4,908,000



INTRODUCTORY

that he would pass through upwards of 20 towns with populations varying from 1,000 to 80,000, besides 300 villages and post-stations. Of all these towns I knew of only one (or perhaps two) to which the British and Foreign Bible Society had been able to send a consignment of Scriptures, and, judging from my experience in other parts of the Empire, I fully anticipated that the prisons, hospitals, barracks, and schools would be insufficiently supplied, or not supplied at all, with the Scriptures or other religious reading. It seemed to me, therefore, that a general distribution of such literature would be a blessing to the people, and remembering that, according to Russian law, no foreign missionaries may labour in the Empire, there appeared to be the greater reason, from my point of view, for spreading the written Word where the spoken word could not go.

Having thus made out a case of need, the next question was, "Am *I* the man to go?" Towards an answer in the affirmative the following considerations pointed:—1. My previous experience had been a training, and I possessed certain preliminary advantages for such a work, because, having been five times on a like holiday errand, and so become known to the Russian authorities, it might be that, though they have restrained others from going to Central Asia, they would perhaps allow *me* to do so. 2. The condition of Russo-English political affairs favoured the project being attempted at once, for the "Eastern Question" raised again might cause the Russians to object. 3. If I did not go, I had no reason to suppose that anyone else would.

The first of these reasons weighed with me heavily, all the more so perhaps because of a short extract from Carlyle which had come under my notice a few days previously. It was this:—"Modern majesty consists in work. What a man can do is his greatest ornament, and he always consults his dignity by doing

it," and when I looked at the third consideration in the light of a higher teaching, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin," I felt that my hesitation thereat must give way if I saw anything like an outward call to the work. If my thoughts were providential leadings, and not mere cogitations, I thought I might reasonably expect that my outward surroundings would in some way be adapted to the work before me. Now I calculated that, if the journey could be accomplished in from four to five months, it would cost at least £400, and, though I did not see it to be my duty to bear the whole expense of the undertaking, yet I resolved that if the cost of travel were forthcoming, from whence I did not know, I was prepared to give my time and energy. And in this direction my way was cleared in the next few days, for, having put my project on paper, I showed it to a friend, who urged me to go, and offered £50 towards the expenses. I then submitted my plans to the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, who had been wishing to extend their work into Siberia (especially since my return thence), and who desired also to penetrate to other new regions as opportunity offered. The Committee had on several occasions given me introductions to their agents, and grants of books for my holiday tours, together with a sum of money on one occasion towards the cost of carriage of the books, and they now hailed with thanks my new proposal. In fact, so hearty was the reception accorded to me, that my courage rose to the occasion, and, instead of asking for a grant of £100, as I intended, I asked for £200, which was given me, and as I left the room a member of the Committee, to whom I was a perfect stranger, offered me £50 more. I then told my story to the Committee of the Religious Tract Society, whose generous grants have encouraged me to distribute more than 100,000 of their publications, and they gave me £100, which, with £10 sent un-

asked for by another friend, led me to decline with thanks another proffered cheque, on the plea that I thought I had enough.

Here, then, end the esoteric antecedents of my journey to Central Asia, which I have been telling the reader in my sanctum. If in so doing I seem to have obtruded what may be regarded as private affairs, I would urge that I have thought it right that the societies which gave me help should receive a public recognition thereof, whilst, as for my personal motives, I see no good reason to withhold them. One of the critics of "*Through Siberia*" wrote: "The utmost commendation must be given to the reverend author, not only for his personal work, but for the good taste that has impelled him to describe his religious labours in language understood of the laity." That this was written by a kindly pen I am sure; but, I suppose, a perverse mind might misinterpret it to mean that I had said too little of my religious labours. Some of my friends thought so. But I did not then set out to write a missionary's report, nor am I doing so now, though I wish it to be clearly understood that the religious character of my journey was paramount. It heightened every pleasure, and softened what perhaps I may not call hardships, but my every inconvenience and fatigue, whilst, in reviewing the whole, it is incomparably that portion of the expedition which affords me the greatest amount of present satisfaction.

The object, then, of my journey, so far as the Bible and Tract societies are concerned, was fourfold:—

1. In 1879, besides distributing more than 50,000 tracts and other religious publications, I gave to the authorities more than sufficient copies of the New Testament and the four Gospels, to enable them to place one (sometimes more) in every room of every prison and every hospital in all Siberia, so that, where my directions have been properly carried out, every prisoner and hospital patient ought to have within

reach at all times of the day, and without having to ask for it from the library, a copy of some portion of the Word of God. In 1882 I wished to do the same for the prisons and hospitals of Russian Central Asia, thus completing my work for the whole of Asiatic Russia.

2. Besides supplying the prisons, hospitals, and other public institutions with religious literature, I was anxious to do something of a similar character for the many thousands of Russian exiles, who are compulsory colonists, or who, after a short term in prison, are released to colonize in remote parts of Siberia, where it is all but impossible for them to procure religious books. I hoped to effect this by making some arrangement of a permanent character, by which books might be distributed to these exiles as they pass through Tiumen, the general depôt, whence they are forwarded to their far-distant destinations.

3. As I should be passing through regions where the Bible is all but unknown, and religious tracts unheard of—where, moreover, the people might not have another opportunity of procuring them locally for many years—I wished generally to sell and distribute as many as possible.

4. My route lying through new countries, I was to inquire what need there existed for making new translations, and to see what openings presented themselves for promoting generally the objects of the two societies.

These were my religious aims; but if I had intended to make them the boundary of my horizon, my friends were determined that they should not remain so. One asked me to make a collection of flower seeds, botanical specimens, beetles and butterflies. I replied that I should not remain long enough in the different places for this, and that it would be a curious telegram to send on ahead to a stranger, "Please have in readiness for me, on such a day and hour, half-a-dozen horses, the *samovar* for tea,

and—a collection of the butterflies, beetles, and plants of the neighbourhood!” My friend, however, urged that the pursuit of the required game would be a healthful recreation for the parties concerned, and I accordingly gave a vague promise that I would see what could be done. Then, my friend Mr. Henry Howorth, learning that I was going among his dear “Mongols,” of whom he has written so voluminously, not only tried to interest me in them, but set on me *his* friend, Mr. Augustus Franks, F.R.S., who honoured me by a request that I would collect for him ethnographical specimens and antiquities for the British Museum. Added to this, I thought I might perhaps search with success for Hebrew manuscripts in Bokhara. My neighbour, Mr. Glaisher, F.R.S., of aeronautical fame, as on a previous occasion, lent me instruments for taking meteorological observations; and, besides all this, I had sundry editorial friends, who wished me to see and take notes of everything possible, and write to them something thereon.

Of course, there were not wanting those who thought my project a hopeless one. Had not other Englishmen tried in vain to penetrate to Russian Central Asia? And was not one of them—a clergyman, too, who proceeded by stealth as far as Tashkend—ordered to be off within four-and-twenty hours? Did I then expect to get to *Bokhara*? to which, on one occasion when I answered in the affirmative, my questioner sank back in his chair with a look indicating that he deemed it utterly useless to have anything more to say to one so quixotic.

But, besides these of little faith, there were some of my older friends who looked back 40 years, and recalled that the last two Englishmen who entered Bokhara were put to death, and that Dr. Wolff, who went to ascertain their fate, nearly lost his life. By them I was thought to be entering on a dangerous enterprise; but I was able to assure them that I had

not the slightest intention of putting my head into the lion's mouth merely for the satisfaction of saying that I had done so, and that, unless I had not only the permission, but the cordial support of the Russians, I should probably not enter Bokhara. If, however, I am to be candid, I must admit that I was not without fear. I realized it to be the most dangerous journey I had undertaken, to this extent, at all events, that as our worthy forefathers used to make their wills before setting out on a journey from York to London, so I imitated their example, and set my house in order. I then committed myself into His keeping in whose name I was going forth, and—started.

CHAPTER II.

FROM LONDON TO THE URALS.

Five routes to Central Asia.—Departure for Petersburg.—Favourable reception.—Official letters and favours.—Scientific acquaintances and introductions.—Departure for Moscow.—National Exhibition and St. Saviour's Cathedral.—Mr. Alfred Sevier as interpreter.—Our arrival at Perm.—Purchase of tarantass and medicines.—Departure for the Urals.—Tract distribution.—Arrested and brought back to Perm.—Examined and released with apologies.—My own fault.—Exaggerated reports in newspapers.—A fresh start.

THERE are at least five routes between London and Russian Central Asia. The most southerly of these would be by the Mediterranean to the Tigris valley, through Persia to Meshed, and then across the desert by Merv and Charjui to Bokhara, and Samarkand. By this route I thought perhaps to have returned, but was assured, by Russians and natives alike, that it would be next to impossible for me to escape the Turkomans between the Oxus and Merv. The second route is that by which I came back; namely, Odessa and the Crimea, across the Caucasus and Caspian to Krasnovodsk, then by camels to Khiva, whence there is a caravan road to Bokhara, or another on Russian territory through Petro-Alexandrovsk and Jizak to Tashkend. He should be a sturdy traveller, however, who would attempt this route. A third way would be by rail to Orenburg, and then following the post-road along the Syr-daria to Tashkend. This is the best route in autumn, but a difficult one in spring, by reason of floods and lack of horses. The fourth route, which I thought at first to follow, is from Orenburg to Omsk

and Semipolatsk, and so past Lake Balkhash and Vierny to Tashkend. My plans for the exiles, however, rendered it necessary that I should go to Tiumen, and I therefore followed the fifth route, which, though longest, was, in spring, decidedly the easiest, namely, by rail to Nijni Novgorod, by steamer to Perm, by rail and post to Tiumen, whence steamers ply on the Irtysh to Semipolatsk, and so onwards by posting as in the previous route.

I left London on the evening of the 26th June 1832, and, three evenings later, reached Petersburg, to find at the terminus the English tutor of the sons of the Grand Duke Michael, (uncle of the Emperor,) whose wife, the Grand Duchess Olga, had thus honoured me by sending to inquire when I could lunch at the *Michailovsky dacha* or summer palace. I named the morrow, and was then privileged to renew an acquaintanceship formed two years previously at Borjom, when I asked permission of the Grand Duke Michael to place copies of the Scriptures in the prisons and hospitals of the Caucasus. His Imperial Highness heard with interest of my projected journey, warned me that I should be unable to pass from Charjui to Merv (though I might reach the latter, he thought, from the Russian side), and kindly gave me a letter of introduction to Count Tolstoy, the Minister of the Interior.

I had sent to this statesman, as head of the prison department, a few days previously, a copy of my "Through Siberia," so that with him the tongue of good report had already been heard in my favour; and upon presenting my letter on the 1st of July, the Count's opening words to me were of thanks for the book, which, notwithstanding the pressure of official duties, he said he had found leisure to peruse, and had done so with the greatest pleasure. The Count then listened to the story of my projected tour, asked what I wanted, and said, "I will do all that I can to help

you." Thus, providentially, I had leaped into the right quarter at a bound, and within eight-and-forty hours of my reaching Petersburg had virtually obtained permission to do what I wished.

A few days later I received an official letter of thanks for my book, and also a separate commendatory letter (not one circular document, as in previous years) to the governor of each of the provinces through which I was to pass.

The Count had thus redeemed his promise, but I made bold to ask another favour, and a great one,—so great, indeed, that I did not until afterwards realize its magnitude. I begged to be allowed to see the political prison in the fortress of SS. Peter and Paul. Count Tolstoy at first said "No," but subsequently I was allowed to do so, and I shall give hereafter an account of what I saw; but I may add that, as I was leaving the prison, I asked one of the officials if visitors like myself were often thus admitted. He replied that he had been there 22 years, and had never seen one before!

But there were other magnates to be seen, especially one who happened to be in Petersburg—I mean General Chernaieff, then recently appointed Governor-General of Turkistan. Here I have thankfully to acknowledge the help of a letter from our Foreign Office to the English Ambassador, Sir Edward Thornton, K.C.B., who had left the capital a few days previously for the country, but who was represented by Lord Frederick Hamilton. Lord Frederick most kindly procured for me, from the Asiatic department, a letter to the Governor-General, which, on being presented, was duly honoured, and I was furnished with an open document that made me the envy of several would-be travellers in Turkistan. After this a letter was given me from the Post Office authorities to assist me in procuring horses, and thus my official papers were complete.

But I could not yet start for lack of an interpreter ; and I wished to procure numerous introductions. Here the letters of my scientific friends, and my preparations for the execution of their commissions, stood me in good stead. The Grand Duke Nicolai, eldest son of the Grand Duke Michael, is an ardent lepidopterist, and has a magnificent collection of butterflies. His Imperial Highness introduced me to his curator, Dr. Gustav Sievers, who gave me sundry hints and aids, as also did Dr. Strauch, the Director of the Zoological Museum, to whom I was introduced by Mr. Vessilovski, the Secretary of the Academy of Sciences. The Imperial Geographical Society is an influential association in Russia, and extends its operations over a wider field of science than its name implies. From Mr. Vice-President Semenoff, and the obliging Secretary, Mr. V. J. de Sreznevski, I obtained many introductions. I made, too, the acquaintance of Baron Osten-Sacken, Director of the House of the General Staff ; Baron Rosen, Professor of Oriental Literature ; Mr. Regel, the Director of the Botanical Gardens ; Dr. Albert Harkavy, of the Imperial Library ; and Private Councillor Grimm, an antiquarian, whom I found in the department of coins in the Hermitage ; as also of several literary gentlemen, all of whom received me kindly, and most of whom gave me or put me in the way of procuring information respecting the little-known parts whither I was proceeding.

But from Petersburg, indeed, was a "far cry" to Central Asia, and I hoped to feel nearer at Moscow, as there was the chance of meeting persons from the East and, as I hoped, about to return. This anticipation was fulfilled on the first evening I was there, for whilst in Kamensky's office, arranging about the carriage of my books, there came in two men of dark complexion, whom I ventured to ask from whence they hailed. They said they came from Bokhara, and told me of two others from the same place staying in

Moscow. Afterwards, strangely enough, as I was leaving the office, there passed by a Jew, whom I saluted and found that he, too, was a dweller in the city of the Emir. These men gave me sundry pieces of valuable information, and cleared up several obscure points, so that already some of the dangers I had supposed to becloud my way began to disperse.

There were two sights at Moscow I wished to see in passing, namely, the National Exhibition, and the new Cathedral of the Saviour. I had the advantage of visiting the former with our obliging Vice-Consul, Mr. N. W. Hornstedt, who had intended to draw up a report with a view to giving such information respecting the exhibition as would be interesting to English men of commerce. The exhibition was supposed to be restricted to manufactures and productions of the Russian Empire, upon which feature the Muscovites plumed themselves duly, though the boast would not bear too rigid an investigation, for one wickedly disposed might twit his Russian friends by reminding them that some of the things they claimed for their own were in reality the outcome of English brains and hands, as, for instance, an excellent boiler made in the Baltic Provinces, and so admissible to the exhibition, but fabricated of English plates by British workmen. I must not be tempted to enlarge upon details, but will only add that the sight, as a whole, interested me exceedingly, illustrating, as it did so vividly, the enormous size and immense fecundity of the Empire. The products of the frigid stood side by side with those of regions near the torrid zone, and there seemed to be no variety of human wants which Russia was unable to supply either from above or below ground.

As for the Cathedral of the Saviour, built in Ancient Russian or rather Græco-Byzantine style, a remarkable fact in my eyes was that it had been erected in a single lifetime, and that there was given to the people

of Moscow, what falls to the lot of few generations to see—a grand cathedral new in all its parts. The building, covering an area of 73,000 square feet, awaited consecration, and was rigidly closed to the public, except by special order of the Governor, with which I was favoured. I will mention only a few data to show on what magnificent lines it has been built. Thus, on the exterior of the building, 900 lbs. of gold were used for overlaying its five cupolas. Of its 13 bells the largest weighs half as much again as “Great Paul” in London, and the doors of the temple, of which the largest weighs 13 tons, cost £62,000. As for the interior, I have seen most of the celebrated cathedrals in Europe, but I know of nothing so exquisite as St. Saviour’s. It reminded me most of the interior of Santa Sophia, at Constantinople. The floor is of marble, and the walls are lined with exquisite varieties of the same material, the entire cost of marble alone having exceeded £300,000. Round the cupola are two rows of 1,240 candelabra, placed there at a cost of nearly £40,000, and nearly as much as this was expended on the materials and workmanship of the altar space, without reckoning its ikons and pictures, of which latter the church is full. This costly fane has been erected at a cost of two and a quarter million pounds sterling, and is said to be capable of accommodating 10,000 worshippers.

I was able, in Moscow, to add to my store of introductions, and would gladly have pushed forward, only that I had not yet lighted upon a suitable interpreter. Thanks to the kindness of friends who had been on the look-out before my arrival, I found several in Petersburg who were willing at first to go, but subsequently some were alarmed at reports of Turkistan tigers and fevers; others were weak in Russian, in English, or in health; whilst a fourth, who would have made hardly a companion, but an energetic courier, was eventually kept back by the entreaties of his

wife. I had called one morning at Messrs. Egerton Hubbards' to inquire for an interpreter, and was driving away almost in despair, and wondering that my way in other things should have been made so clear, whilst in this it seemed blocked, when a gentleman named Sevier drove alongside my droshky, and said he had heard I needed an interpreter. He was doubtful as to whether he could offer his own services, but if not, he thought his brother at Vienna might like to go. This was on the 8th July, and I left Petersburg on the 11th, with this offer in reserve to be arranged by correspondence or telegram, if I met with no one more suitable at Moscow. Here again were two or three who would have liked to go, one of whom I had added as a second string to my bow, when, on the morning of the day I was to proceed on a short visit to the interior, I received a telegram from Petersburg that Mr. Alfred Sevier was willing to join me from Vienna. My mind was so evenly balanced between the claims of two persons that I knew not how to decide; but at length I telegraphed, "Please let him come immediately, and catch me as quickly as he can"; and this Mr. Sevier did on the steamer going to Perm, where we arrived on the 29th of July.

We were met by an Englishman, Mr. Parsons, junr. who, with his young wife, accorded us a hearty and hospitable welcome, and assisted me in the important purchase of a tarantass, or travelling carriage, which was expected to carry us 3,000 miles, and to be our dwelling and sleeping place for a long succession of days and nights. Of two Mr. Parsons had selected for my approval, I chose the larger, its extreme inside measurements being 6 ft. 8 in. long, by 3 ft. 8 in. wide, and 4 ft. 4 in. from the floor to the top of the hood. It was not quite new, but came from the best of builders—Romanoff, of Kazan—and notwithstanding that it cost me heavily for carriage from Perm, it proved an excellent bargain, though had I not bought it on

very favourable terms, I should have done better under ordinary circumstances to have obtained one in Ekaterineburg.

Perm was the last large town we passed through before leaving Europe, so I took the opportunity to make a few more purchases, whilst Mrs. Parsons kindly added to our catables a valuable store of cherry jam. Mr. Alfred Hynam Sevier, M.B., proved to be a physician who had just finished his studies at Edinburgh, Paris, and Vienna. It struck me accordingly as highly proper—nay, also having Scriptural precedent—that the practice of divinity and medicine should go together, and I therefore commissioned my companion to invest a sovereign in drugs, so that we might physic right and left as occasion might require or opportunity might serve. We were then ready to proceed, and on the evening of the 30th, Mr. and Mrs. Parsons, in Russian fashion, accompanied us to the station to see us off. The occasion was almost a grand one. I was introduced to the station-master, who showed every disposition to make us comfortable. The manager of one of the steamboat companies was there, and gave me sundry pieces of advice respecting my journey. So, too, was the principal doctor in the town, whom I had met in 1879, and he had brought with him a worthy notary, who wished to give me a box of beetles and butterflies, whilst I was besides presented to a general officer, the brand new Governor of Irkutsk, on his way to take up his appointment; and all this before the *élite* of Perm, who, in their best attire, were promenading the spacious platform. One result was I fear that, for the time being, I lost my head, and forgot to mention to the authorities a little plan I had in hand, the disastrous results of which omission will presently be seen. Moreover, as, by some means unknown to me, an allusion thereto got into the Russian and English newspapers, I shall give my narration somewhat in detail.

My books and tracts, as already hinted, were sent before me to Moscow, and as I found on arriving there that I could send them by heavy transit to Tiumen, I did so, intending to make no distribution in European Russia. I determined thus for two reasons; partly because of the unquiet state of the country, and the temporary trouble and delay I might bring upon myself by distributing pamphlets; but more out of deference to what I believe I may call the conviction of the Committees of the Bible and Religious Tract Societies, that in localities where their colporteurs are at work, the profuse and indiscriminate distribution of Bibles and tracts is a hindrance to the success of their agents, inasmuch as the people decline to buy, and sometimes fail to value religious reading, which they can now and again get without so much as asking for it.

An amiable friend, however, had suggested, and I readily consented, that I should take a small bag of bundles of tracts, neatly wired together, supposed to be suitable for offering to thoughtful persons here and there, rather than for scattering by handfuls everywhere; and these were to be distributed on my way to join my boxes gone before.

Accordingly I commenced operations at the first railway station out of Perm, but warily; for, from experience, I anticipated that if, whilst the train were standing, I commenced distribution, I should be surrounded with applicants, and the contents of my bag left nearly all in one village. I therefore waited til the train was on the move, leaned out of the window, and placed a bundle of tracts in the hand of the gendarme on duty. At the next station I acted similarly, offering the packet to the red-capped station-master, who ran forward to take it, but suddenly stopped, whereupon I threw the parcel at his feet. After this it became dusk; so we arranged our cushions and "turned in" for the night.

All went peaceably enough till the train stopped at Chusovaia, 80 miles from Perm, about two o'clock in the morning, when a gendarme, on the track of a supposed Nihilist, put his head into the compartment ; but, over-awed, I suppose, by the respectable appearance of the persons within, withdrew and closed the door. Presently he came again, but, his heart still failing him, he once more retired. On his third attempt, however, he caught sight of the tracts on the rack and asked if we had any books. Thinking, in the innocence of my heart, that he was in quest of spiritual food, I said "Certainly," and graciously offered him some. But he looked severe, and said that we and our baggage must all come out to be examined. I laughed, and showed him, and the station-master who had entered, my official permission to distribute religious literature. The station-master seemed to see that all was right, but the gendarme stuck to his prey like a leech, and pulled from behind his cuff a telegram sent from a previous station by one of his fraternity. I then went to the General, who was in another carriage, and asked his influence to set me right. His Excellency came, stood at his full height (which was not diminutive), and introduced himself to the station-master as "the Governor of Irkutsk." He also read the telegram, but, shaking his head, said he could not help me, for it was written in the despatch that "proclamations" (that is Nihilistic pamphlets) had been found in the tracts I had given away. I replied that it was all "stuff and nonsense." "That is precisely what you have to go and prove," he answered. "But it will lose me four-and-twenty hours," I said. "Better that," he replied, "than four-and-twenty days" : upon which I gave in, and allowed my hand baggage to be brought into the waiting-room, whilst our tarantass, with portmanteaus, etc., went forward.

We had now to wait for "the next train up," due in about two hours, thus giving us time to telegraph

forward to a friend to look after our coming luggage, and to Mr. Parsons, to say that we were returning under arrest to Perm. As we sat in the restaurant we were curiously eyed by the public generally, and a posse of gendarmes, who at length suggested that we should change our quarters, for that it was "*infra dig.*" for gentlemen to be thus watched by policemen in a first-class waiting-room ; to which I replied that *we* did not feel in the least ashamed, and I put on a cheerful look accordingly. Further, to improve the occasion, and as the gendarmes appeared to have nothing to do, we offered them to read some of the dreadful pamphlets that had caused our arrest, but they were afraid (probably of each other), and said they dared not accept them.

When the train came up we were placed in a compartment with a gendarme to guard us. He was a good-natured, respectful sort of fellow, but not very clear in intellect. I said that we had sent forward many thousands of tracts to distribute, which intelligence he somehow muddled up with the supposition that we were going to print them. Now the Russian word for a printing establishment, if transliterated into English, is "typography," and as this word was "much of a muchness" with a similar word that had at some time passed through the gendarme's brain, he inquired whether we were going to set up a *photography* ! We assured him we intended nothing so seditious ; and, on finding that he had children, I offered him a New Testament and some tracts, which he stuffed into his pockets, and at the next station was relieved by another of four gendarmes who were in attendance upon us. We were next under charge of the little ferret-faced fellow who carried the telegram, and was somewhat disposed to give himself airs. Presently he wanted to smoke, which I forbade. He then went to do so in the gangway, leaving open the door, which I rose and not very gently shut. He promptly re-opened

it, whereupon I stamped my foot, and if I did not shake my fist I let him see unmistakably that I would not have the atmosphere about me defiled, whereupon he made some remark about my being an Englishman, and caved in. We then sent the little man to Coventry, which exercised on him a subduing effect, so that ere we reached Perm he was getting quite obsequious, for he began to suspect that he had made a mistake.

On arriving at the terminus about nine o'clock, Mr. Parsons and the station-master, true to friends in adversity, were there to meet us, and we were asked to be seated in the gendarmes' chamber, where presently arrived the Police Captain and the Procureur of the Town. The Captain's hair was all sixes and sevens; he was smoking, and looked as if he might have been out all night on the spree; whilst "Monsieur le Procureur" was faultlessly clothed in a dress-coat of black, with gold buttons and green velvet collar, with a white tie of spotless purity, and carried an important-looking portfolio. He wore the dignified air of a man who had serious business in hand, and after allowing him to settle himself, I opened fire by saying,—

"Well, gentlemen, you have brought us back: pray, what have I been doing?"

"You have been distributing proclamations."

"Very good; where are they?" said I.

"We have sent for them, but the man has not yet come."

Here, then, things were stayed, for my accuser was six miles away. I therefore led off in another direction, and produced various documents I had about me, such as the open letter of General Tchernaiëff, and an old one of the Minister of the Interior, and I said that I had on my previous journey distributed more than 50,000 books and pamphlets in Siberia. I also showed an autograph letter addressed to me by the Grand Duchess Olga, the official letter of Count

Tolstoy, and a communication from the Russian Ambassador in London, thanking me for a copy of my book presented to the Emperor. This heavy artillery soon began to tell. The Captain allowed that from my permission it was clear I had a right to distribute the tracts, and the Procureur observed that it was exceedingly unlikely that persons with such letters in possession would be distributing proclamations. Another thought appeared then to seize him, and he asked whether I knew any priest in the town, and I, without sufficient thought, answered "No."

"Was there a priest on board the steamer when you came before?"

"Oh, yes!" I said, "I remember, he wished me to get a book he had recently published translated into English."

"Ah!" said the Procureur, gazing hard at me, "I remember you now, for I also was on board; but at that time you wore a beard!"

I produced evidence thereof by showing one of my old photographs.

"Yes, to be sure," he said, as he looked at the picture; and then he added, in soliloquy, "What an apostolic face!" causing us, of course, to laugh; after which he told the Captain there was no ground for bringing an accusation against us, and that, in fact, they had rendered themselves liable to be sued. The Procureur then asked pardon for having detained us, and pleaded the excited state of the country as an excuse, whilst the Captain in turn screened himself behind the over-zealousness of one of his subalterns. It was now my turn to be gracious, and I took blame to myself (which I really deserved) for not having mentioned to the station-master before I started what I was going to do, for then all would have gone smoothly enough, but the narrow limits of my intended distribution caused me, I suppose, to forget it. We were then asked to sign a protocol to be kept in the

archives, giving the particulars of our arrest, saying that two Englishmen had passed through Perm, that one of them threw a bundle of publications in one instance, and in another handed some, from the train, but that the publications on being examined proved to be religious pamphlets, bearing titles such as followed, and so we parted with mutual apologies and shaking of hands.

One of my abettors present was greatly disgusted with "these Russians," as he called them, and expressed his opinion that the gendarme who sent the telegram would "get it hot," or perhaps be dismissed. I asked in the evening whether the informer had made his appearance, but was told that the party were so ashamed of themselves that they were taking care to keep out of my way. I had, however, broken the law in throwing printed matter from a train in motion, a regulation that in the excited state of the country was reasonable enough, but which I did not know to be an offence. The gendarme, moreover, who received the tracts was in the main right, for the Nihilists are very subtil, and not only put seditious leaflets into duly authorized tracts to distribute, but I have heard on good authority of a Bible having been seen, beginning with Genesis and ending with Revelation, but filled in with—Nihilistic matter! The telegram, therefore, of the gendarme sent to his chief, and read by the Captain at Perm, was so far correct, and seemed to say that our books should be examined because he thought they *might* contain proclamations, whereas in sending after us he seemed to have muddled his grammar, and said that the tracts distributed *did* contain proclamations.

The matter was then dismissed from my mind till we returned to Europe, and found that first the Russian and then the English newspapers, not content with my arrest, had been putting me into prison, one of them so fast as to declare it was only by the intercession of the Duchess of Edinburgh that I was released! Thus my friends might well congratulate me, as they did on

my return, at having been liberated. As a matter of fact, however, though twice arrested for distributing tracts, I have never been imprisoned, and in this case the authorities did everything in their power to repair the damage. Our railway tickets were allowed to stand, a first-class compartment was secured for us and marked "reserved," and the guards paid us every attention. Thus we had a ride of 160 miles free of charge, as well as the pleasure of a little excitement, and started by the next train, once more to attempt, and this time successfully, the crossing of the Urals.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE URALS TO OMSK.

Books overtaken: their numbers, kinds, and languages.—Acquaintanceships renewed at Tiumen.—Success of former efforts.—Books for future supply of exiles.—Testimonies to their thankfulness for Scriptures distributed.—Final equipment, and introductions.—New Siberian steamer.—Mr. Ignatoff's generosity.—River voyage.—Sale of books on deck.—Interview with Governor of Tobolsk.—Visit to cemetery and Archbishop.—Voyage up the Irtysh.—Cheap provisions.—Fellow-passengers.—Arrival at Omsk.

EKATERINEBURG is the railway terminus at which the traveller arrives in passing from Perm into Asia, but here we stayed only four-and-twenty hours, before posting to Tiumen, which we reached on August 4th. At Tiumen I found my books, and that not a moment too soon, for by a clerk's mistake they were shipped for Tomsk, a blunder which, had it not been detected, would have cost us at least a month's delay. Here I may mention that, before starting for Central Asia, it was more difficult than when going to Siberia, to form a correct estimate as to how many publications I could carry and properly dispose of, and in what languages and dialects they would be required. The committees of the two societies kindly placed at my disposal such a number of their books respectively as seemed desirable, and practicable, and I wrote to the Rev. W. Nicholson my faithful ally, who has always been so ready to help me, in Petersburg, to get ready 5,000 Scriptures, 10,000 Russian tracts, 1,000 copies of a monthly paper called the *Russian Workman*, and an illustrated broad-

sheet entitled "The Prodigal Son." These were to be packed in strong wooden boxes, iron-hooped at the ends, and corded; and when I arrived and found 30 of them awaiting me, to say nothing of personal baggage and provisions, I confess to feeling a little alarmed at the burden prepared for my back. The Scriptures consisted of Bibles, Old Testaments, New Testaments, the four Gospels (bound together and singly), and the Book of Psalms. They were printed in Russian, Slavonic, Hebrew, Chinese, Mongolian, Kirghese, Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Polish, German, and French, and these, as I have said, I was able to book through to Tiumen, where I hoped to deposit a considerable number for distribution to the exiles.

It was very pleasant in this town to renew acquaintanceships formed three years previously, which I did first with an English family named Wardropper, and then with Mr. Ignatoff, who contracts for the carriage by water of the exiles to Tomsk, and of soldiers to Semipolatsk. This gentleman so thoroughly approved of the object that led me to Siberia in 1879, that, unasked, he took my luggage free of cost, and after my departure gave every facility on his barges for distribution of my books to the exiles as each company embarked. Thus the Bibles and tracts I had left behind had been carefully given out under supervision, and I was pleased to hear that, when my stock of Scriptures was exhausted, Mr. Ignatoff had sent, at his own expense, for 200 more. Specimen copies of the books and tracts had been sent to the Governor-General, as well as to the Governor and the Archbishop of Tobolsk, who were pleased with the work and with the books, and sanctioned their distribution. A report of what had been done was subsequently sent to them, Mr. Ignatoff informed me. He was able to tell me also that the publications had been much appreciated, and that on more than one occasion the exiles had drawn up a written form

of thanks and signed their names. Many, too, had thanked him individually. This testimony was confirmed by the officer who had charge of the prisoners between Tiumen and Tomsk, and who said that the books I left to remain permanently on the barges for the use of prisoners were still there, and accessible to them without having to be asked for. He mentioned, too, incidentally, how little sickness there had been on the barges that season. Eight barges had carried 6,000 prisoners a distance of nearly 2,000 miles. Only 2 (a child and an adult) had died on the passage, and only 20 had been delivered invalided at Tomsk. Yet another testimony pleasing to hear was that of Mr. Wardropper, within sight of whose house the exiles are shipped by thousands, who said that the general condition of the prisoners, and the attention bestowed upon them, had greatly improved during the past few years.

The question then remained as to what could be done in the future for the thousands who every summer pass through Tiumen to be scattered over Siberia; some to be made as colonists at once, and others to spend first their terms in prison or at the mines. The Bible Society had not yet been able to establish depôts in Siberia, east of the Urals, other than at Ekaterineburg and Tomsk,* and although a stray copy of the Scriptures might here and there be found with the merchants in large towns, yet for the mass of the banished it might be said that copies of the Bible were unobtainable even by those willing to buy them. It must have been no small boon, therefore, during the preceding seasons, when, after embarkation of the convicts, at the close of a religious service before they left Tiumen, books and tracts were handed to those who could read: and it was easy to understand that, in many cases, the New Testament thus received had been carried to some distant *izba* or cabin, to form the library of the household,

* A depôt has since been established at Irkutsk.

or, indeed, the only copy of the sacred volume in the village. Accordingly it was determined that there should be left for distribution at and from Tiumen, between 3,000 and 4,000 copies of the Scriptures, and about half my stock of other publications, a large proportion of which was to be given as before to the exiles going east by the barges ; whilst for the 7,000 who are annually distributed in the province of Tobolsk, an invitation was to be given to the vollost (or district) committees to purchase the books at a cheap rate, and to sell them still cheaper to the exiles living free ; and this on the principle that a man values a purchase more than a gift.

Of course we were not so Utopian as to suppose that none of these would be put to a perverted use, or be placed in the hands of those who would not care for them. The tracts, some have said, will be used for cigarettes, and the Bibles be sold for *vodka* (or brandy), which, in some cases, would be quite probable. It would be a rare field in which every seed came to perfection. Nevertheless I am pleased to be able to say that of the scores of thousands of tracts I have given away in Russia, I do not remember ever to have seen one torn or defaced. Mr. Ignatoff's testimony was similar : that among the exiles he had never seen a New Testament spoiled, not even when sold or taken to the dram shop. I had also the independent testimony of an officer over soldiers that guard the prisoners at Tiumen and Tobolsk, and who had been connected with the transport of the exiles to Tomsk, to the effect that when at Tobolsk he had observed how glad the prisoners were to get the books, and how pleased they were to read them. Moreover, he knew no instance of their being torn ; but, on the contrary, he had known cases of prisoners come from Tiumen, who, on being searched at Tomsk, were found to possess New Testaments hidden about them, which they were allowed to keep. That the

prisoners may sell the books to each other, or the exiles occasionally to those willing to buy them, is, of course, possible ; but this surely is not an unmixed evil, for it means that a portion of Scripture has passed out of the hands of one who did not care for it into the hands of one who does. I was, therefore, only too thankful to leave a goodly store of books at Tiumen, finding my friends willing to do with them all that was possible and lawful.

I was able at Tiumen to get a few more introductions for the south. As they now stand in my journal, allocated under the respective towns where they were to be presented, they amount in number to 255 : but this includes documents of all sorts, official and private ; letters open and letters sealed ; cards "to introduce Mr. So-and-So," and cards backed with miniature epistles. Moreover, they extended over a longer route than I covered, for had the way to Central Asia been blocked, I was prepared for a run from Petersburg through Finland, and then to Persia, the Tigris valley, Armenia, Constantinople, Greece, and Italy. Another thing we obtained at Tiumen was a second vehicle wherein to carry the books. Mr. Wardropper ordered to be made for me a strong *telega* or wagonette (though not in the English sense of the word), which answered its purpose admirably. We obtained, too, a few more provisions, but I found I had made a mistake about tinned meat. This article is so heavy that I had deferred its purchase as long as possible on account of the inconvenience and expense of carrying it as passenger's luggage, and thinking to get it at Ekaterineburg or Tiumen ; but at neither town, however, could I procure cans of beef, but only relishes, such as tinned salmon and lobster, or *pâté de foie gras*, and this last at a price to make one's hair stand on end.

In a very short time we were ready to leave for Omsk ; but the question arose, By water or by road ?

Mr. Ignatoff's steamer was not to start for some days, and I was therefore inclined to post with horses. An important factor, however, in my calculations was, 'Where can I meet General Kolpakovsky?' the new Governor-General of the Steppe, who had been resident in the south at Vierny, and was said to be on his way to Omsk, his future residence, but making official inspections *en route*. I had a letter for him, that an officer at Moscow, who knew the country, had strictly counselled me on no account to fail to present, in order that I might receive the proper papers wherewith to enter Kuldja; "for," said he, "so prejudiced are the officials down there, that an autograph letter from the Emperor himself will not gain you admission to Kuldja, if you have not one from General Kolpakovsky." Accordingly, when one day Mr. Ignatoff called on us to say that the Governor-General had left Vierny only the day before, and that, travel as fast as he would, he could not reach Omsk before the date on which the steamer was due, I determined to save the shaking of my bones over that much of post-roads, and to glide to Omsk on the Irtysh. This Mr. Ignatoff strongly urged, not, as will hereafter be seen, touting for passengers, nor with an eye to business, but with desire to perform a generous deed.

Our stay being thus prolonged, we had time to visit the new commercial school, built at the cost of Mr. Padaruyeff, the mayor, and in it the museum, where was a good number of specimens of butterflies, beetles, bees, and moths, collected locally by Mr. Slovtsoff, to whom I had an introduction, but who happened unfortunately to be away. We saw also a good deal of the Wardroppers, who had just astonished the natives with a steamer they had built, of 200 tons displacement, measuring 170 ft. by 22 ft., a hold 7 ft. 6 in. deep, and drawing only 28 in. of water.

On the 10th of August we were to leave Tiumen, and Mr. Ignatoff gave a dinner in my honour, placing

me at the head of the table, and Mr. Sevier opposite; and when, later on, I went to the ticket office, there was handed to me a free pass securing, as far as the steamer could go, a first-class cabin with three berths, free transport of my two vehicles and the whole of my baggage! This I thought a proof of Mr. Ignatoff's sympathy with my work, and the more observable because I was told that he was Russian to the backbone, and hated foreigners; moreover, that he would probably rather have seen my work in the hands of his own countrymen, but that as they did not do it, and I did, he rose above his prejudices and acted in the handsome manner I have described.

We left Tiumen in the small steamer *Kapitan*, that carried us 60 miles down the shallow Tura to its confluence with the Tobol, where we arrived on the morning of the following day. We were then transhipped into the *Serapolets*, a large, convenient, and comfortable boat. During the process of shifting, I observed a man looking steadily at me, whom I recognized as the captain of the *Beljetchenko*, in which I made the voyage three years previously from Tobolsk to Tomsk. I was glad to find he had not forgotten "Mr. Missionary," as he then called me. I recognized also, among the passengers, the French master at the *Gymnase*, whom I had met on my previous visit to Tobolsk.

The holidays were drawing to a close, and several masters and more scholars were returning for the opening term. This gave me an opportunity, which I embraced on the morrow, to sell some Bibles and tracts. Opening a couple of boxes on deck, I was speedily surrounded with purchasers of all classes, and among them several ladies and ardent schoolboys. One little fellow bought of me almost wholesale, and I am afraid nearly emptied his pockets. The masters of the *gymnase* bought copies in French and German, as did some of the scholars, whilst the old-fashioned orthodox

took them in Slavonic. There was a demand, too, for Polish copies. The light in which my purchasers regarded me evidently varied widely. Some understood that I was conducting a labour of love, but others treated me as a merchant pure and simple. One matter-of-fact old lady, of commercial principles truly Russian, caused much amusement to the bystanders by trying to beat me down. Having fixed upon her book, she asked the price. "Twenty-five kopecks," I replied. "But can't you take twenty?" she said; and, heedless of the laughter of the crowd, went on haggling, till I, more anxious as to her future possession of the book than the sum she paid, allowed her to have it at her own price. When the sales began to grow less brisk, and the poorer passengers saw what their richer friends had bought, they came asking for the books at reduced prices, and this I allowed in cases that appeared genuine. This caused the ship's stoker, who had bought at catalogue price, to inquire why others were served cheaper than he; and when we said, "Because they are poor," he wished to know what means we had of divining the contents of their purses.

Thus, on the whole, I did a capital morning's trade, and in the afternoon the boat arrived at Tobolsk. Here I had five things to do: to visit the Governor; to present an introductory letter; to visit an exile's tomb, with a view to getting it sketched; to pay my respects to the Archbishop; and to look at a collection of coins—and all this in the two hours during which the steamer would wait! I had communicated with the Governor, reminding him that I had received no account of the books I left with him on my last visit, to be distributed in the hospitals, prisons, schools, and public institutions of his province, and asking that I might be so favoured, if possible, on my expected arrival. As we drew near the city, his Excellency was steaming about on a pleasure trip, with band playing and colours flying; but seeing our boat arriving, and knowing, as he said, I was

on board, he caused his craft to turn back and come alongside to welcome me. The police-master then handed me a detailed report in writing, and the Governor thanked me for the books he had had to distribute, adding that he should be glad to give a few more, especially in some of the country schools. He then offered to be of any use in his province that he could, put me into the hands of some of his officials to help me to what I wanted in the town, and steamed away.

This occupied about 15 or 20 minutes, and we then drove quickly, under the charge of the police-master, to Madame Znamensky's, who, knowing my haste, accompanied me at once to the cemetery on the heights in the outskirts of the town. Here were buried Wolff and Mouravieff, two celebrated Decembrists, political exiles who took part in the insurrection in December, 1825, and I had been asked by a relative of the latter to visit, if possible, his grave, and look to its condition. Thanks to the care of Madame Znamensky, who had been governess to the exiled nobleman's daughters, the tomb was in good condition, save only that the iron railings were broken, and these could not be mended, because there was no foundry in the district. I asked as to the possibility of getting a photograph of the spot, had the Russian epitaph copied into my note-book, and then, without loss of time, hastened away.

We presented ourselves next at the palace of the Archbishop, whose good-will I was anxious to gain with reference to the books I had left to be distributed at Tiumen ; for, although his Eminence might not have absolute power to forbid their dissemination, he might put difficulties in the way, and it was in any case better that we should have his benediction. Having sent in my card, we were shown into a chamber spacious and lofty, with shrubs and flowers in the windows, reminding me, in one respect at least, of Lambeth Palace, in

that the walls were hung with portraits of Archbishops for many generations, though the number at Tobolsk was much fewer, and the pictures mere daubs compared with some of the portraits at Lambeth. I learned that the present Archbishop of Tobolsk had only recently been appointed, and that it was not he who approved my books and tracts as left before. I had, therefore, to explain the object and character of my mission, and told him of the books I had left for distribution. He seemed at first to be somewhat suspicious that we were actuated by sectarian motives, but ultimately expressed his pleasure at what we were doing, and wished us God-speed!

We then drove to the park close by to peep at Siberia's one monument—that of Yermak, the robber chief who added Siberia to the Russian Empire. The present monument is a stone column standing in a garden. The former one consisted of a wooden figure, to which the Tatars set fire out of revenge; but the remains of it are still preserved in a shed within the grounds.

We afterwards descended the hill to look at a private collection of copper coins and medals, the value of which, however, we thought exaggerated, and hurried on to the boat to find that the captain had kindly been waiting only for us.

Thus far my journey from London had been over old ground, save that in 1879 I followed the post-road from Tiumen to Tobolsk. I was now to wander into fresh fields, and make way up the Irtysh to Omsk, a voyage that occupied five days. The regular service of steamers running fortnightly, or thereabouts, from Tiumen to Omsk, and (when the water is sufficient) to Semipolatsinsk, had been started about two years only, the chief demand for it being the annual transport of young soldiers on their way to Turkistan. They travel on a large barge tugged astern of the passenger steamer, both proceeding slowly, and helping to make a dull journey somewhat tedious.

The banks of the river possess no beauty, and little interest. When Yermak pushed his way into Siberia at the close of the sixteenth century, he took a small fortress on the banks of the Irtysh called Sibir, the ruins of which I was under the impression were still to be seen ;* but in answer to my inquiries it was said to be unknown, as also the spot where Yermak fell into the Irtysh and was drowned. We passed very few habitations, and not many cattle. On the second day after leaving Tobolsk we arrived at Ust-Ishim, a *selo*, or church village, with only 14 Russian houses, but with a large number of Tatar habitations. It derives what little importance it has from being the centre of the corn trade for the surrounding district, the grain being gathered there for the market at Tobolsk.

These delays for taking fuel were not altogether unwelcome, because they allowed of our going on shore to look at the villages and to see what the peasantry had to offer in the way of raspberries and other fruits, cucumbers and curdled milk, called *prostokvasha*. We were able to exchange commodities in offering them Scriptures and tracts, which usually they took readily. At a certain church village we called and sold books to the priest, who was glad to purchase—though at Ust-Ishim, where I sent parcels of tracts to three ecclesiastics on the bank, one of them, I suppose from fear or misunderstanding, declined to accept them. We sold several publications also at a cheap rate to the officer on the soldiers' barge, for distribution among the men. On the 15th-16th of August, in the middle of the night, we reached Tara, a town of 6,000 inhabitants, and 460 miles from Tobolsk. I remembered the name of this place,

* In Chap. ix., p. 110 of "Through Siberia." London : Sampson Low & Co., Fleet Street ;—America : Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., Boston ;—German Translation, Hermann Costenoble, Jena ;—Swedish Translation, Albert Bonnier, Stockholm ;—Danish Translation, O. H. Delbanco, Copenhagen.

because I had read of its prison, from which the exile Pietrovski escaped, made his way over the Urals to Archangel, and thence to Western Europe. I myself was awaked from my slumbers there, to learn that the police-master of Tara had come on board and asked for me. I dressed of course in haste, with the chance possibly of being again arrested and taken back. But all was right this time, the Governor at Tobolsk having telegraphed to the police-master to present himself on my arrival, and inquire if there was aught I required.

Everything, however, was going smoothly, if not rapidly, enough. My time was occupied in reading books of the region whither we were going, and the steward provided an excellent table. Thus our dinner on the day after leaving Tobolsk consisted of, first, clear soup made of sterlet—a fish at largest about two feet long, and weighing 10 lbs., with pale pink flesh like that of a Loch Leven trout, remarkably tender, and almost tasteless I thought; but the flavour of which is so highly esteemed in Petersburg, that the soup there costs 3s. a plate. The second course—boiled *nelma*, a bigger fish than the preceding, with firm, white flesh, and, as I thought, *very* good. The third course consisted of *tetierka*, and a good, dry-tasting game the Russians call *glukhar*, or capercailzie. The fourth course was of *prostokvasha*, made of sour milk and cream. Such a dinner ordered *à la carte* costs from 1s. 6d. to 2s.; and I heard that at Tara other provisions were equally cheap.

I need hardly say that among our fellow-passengers were no tourists. Travellers for pleasure are rare indeed in Siberia and Turkistan. We met with only two in all Central Asia. But there were upper-form "gymnasts" returning to school at Omsk, who on Sunday evening hymned to me on deck some Russian Church music, whilst I in turn sang them in Latin the "Agnus Dei" in Mozart's "First Mass." So, too, there was a Russian merchant and his wife, who spoke

English, and who, it was easy to see, had travelled. They were going home to their children at Tara having, since they left them, accomplished the circuit of the world. The husband's business establishments were at Hankow and Foochow, to which places the lady had twice crossed the Mongolian desert from her father's house in Kiakhta; but this time they had preferred crossing the two oceans, America, and Europe, instead of returning westwards through Siberia. We became very good travelling friends, and as they left us at Tara, they gave me a cordial invitation, should I come near them in China, "just to look in," which I expressed myself forward to do.

Thus we lost at this second station two pleasant passengers, but we gained other two; for there came on board a lady and her daughter, who spoke excellent French. They were accompanied by two gentlemen who appeared to be "in attendance," which was explained when I discovered that the lady was the wife of the Governor of Akmolinsk, who for the time being was acting for the Governor-General. The fact that I had a letter for her husband was of course an introduction, and when, after passing the third station, Kartashevo, we arrived on the 17th at Omsk, I was introduced on the landing-stage to the Governor, and invited to dinner on the following day.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM OMSK TO SEMIPOLATINSK.

Description of town of Omsk.—Cause of its decline.—Schools.—Visits to inhabitants and institutions.—Dinner with Governor.—Protestant pastor and distribution of books.—Departure southwards.—Cossack stations.—Summer appearance of steppe.—Arrival at Pavlodar.—Scriptures sold to Muhammadans, advice to contrary notwithstanding.—Cheap provisions.—Roads to mining districts.—Recruits on the march.—Meeting the Governor-General.—Skirting the Irtysh.—Change of landscape.—Improved fauna and flora.—Arrival at Semipolatsinsk.

ON arriving at Omsk I noticed from the deck of the steamer an officer on the landing stage, whose face seemed familiar to me. He turned out to be the police-master who, three years before, had shown me the prisons of Tomsk. He recognized me, and kindly sent men to look after the baggage, by whose help ere long we were safely housed at the Hotel Moskva. Omsk is a government town of 31,000 inhabitants, situated, at an altitude of 261 feet, in the strip of Russian colonization that divides the Kirghese of the south from the Tatars of the north, and is built upon the banks of the Om. at its confluence with the Irtysh, the two parts of the town being connected by a substantial wooden bridge. Omsk was founded in 1717, and the gateways of its fortress are still standing on the right bank of the river. Near at hand are large public offices, military and civil, whilst on the other side of the stream are situated the large stone house of the Governor-General, the cathedral, a Roman Catholic chapel, some mosques, a Lutheran

church, a large military *gymnase* or high school, and several others lower in grade. As usual in Siberian towns, the streets are wide, and in front of the house of the Governor-General is a triangular public garden; but the glory of Omsk is undoubtedly on the wane. Formerly it was on the high road from Europe to China, but the opening of another road further north, and the conversion of the Obi into a summer route, have diverted the traffic, and so lessened its commercial importance.

It was for a long time debated whether the new Siberian university should not be established at Omsk, but the decision was given in favour of Tomsk, and the result must prove detrimental to the former. Again, Omsk has derived much importance from being the seat of government, and the residence of the Governor-General of Western Siberia, who thus lived in about the centre of his vice-royalty; whereas now that the provinces of Akmolinsk and Semipolatsk have been thrown into the general government of the Steppe, that ruler finds himself all but expatriated to the extreme north-east corner of his dominions, from the best parts of which he is a thousand miles distant. I heard that General Kolpakovsky had a great desire to transfer the seat of government to his old quarters at Vierny, so that, should this be done, there is every prospect of Omsk declining more and more.

On the day we arrived it had been raining in torrents, but this did not prevent us in the evening from taking a droshky to make some calls, and driving boldly through the streets with pools of water up to the axles. A branch of the Imperial Geographical Society was founded at Omsk in 1877, and I had introductions to some of its members. One of the first acquaintances we made was Mr. Balkashin, who has been appointed the Imperial Russian Consul for Chuguchak, and he was only awaiting an interview



OMSK FROM THE GARDEN OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

with the Governor-General before proceeding thither. This gentleman had lived at Yaroslaf, where he had met two English writers on Russia—Mr. Mackenzie Wallace and Mr. R. S. W. Ralston. He had also seen the Hungarian traveller, Mr. Ujfalvy, who describes him in his book as a *savant*. This gentleman gave us a warm reception, and sundry pieces of antiquarian information; but what impressed him most on my recollection was his earnest advice relative to my contemplated experiment in spreading the Scriptures among the Kirghese. When he discovered that I thought of attempting it, he became quite animated, and said, "*Dieu vous préserve, Monsieur, ne faites pas cela*. The Kirghese are such bigoted Muhammadans that they start back at the very sight of a cross, and I strongly advise you to have nothing whatever to do with them of a religious character. You will very likely be injured, and get yourself into a row, and the Russians too"; and as if this store of advice were not enough, his parting words on the following day were to the same effect.

Another acquaintance we made, both agreeable and useful, in Mr. James Kossagovsky, son of the Governor of Odessa. He spoke English well, kindly placed himself at our disposal, and accompanied us next morning, with the police-master, to see the prison. He took us likewise to inspect a small industrial asylum founded more than 20 years before by a lady of the town, named Duganmel, for 20 girls and 24 boys. The children were clothed alike, educated in some of the schools in the town, and taught various handicrafts, at a total annual cost of £6 10s. for each child, to defray which the institution had a capital of £3,000, the rest being made up by bazaars, concerts, and voluntary offerings. Each child, I was told, was already provided with a copy of the Gospels, but the authorities were pleased to accept some of my books also.

We called on the Commandant, but time did not allow of my visiting the military prison, though I arranged for sending thereto some books. An introduction to Colonel Sokoloff brought me into the tastefully furnished house of an officer who busied himself in leisure hours with the study of chemistry and meteorology. He had heard of my book on Siberia, and gave me a valuable introduction to the Russian consul at Kuldja. We were taken next to the museum; that reminded me only too forcibly of many like it I have seen in Russia: of an undertaking well begun but not carried through. The collection of natural history objects was not large, though there was a fair number of beetles and butterflies. More interesting perhaps to an antiquarian were some relics of a past age in bronze and stone. When Mr. Ujfalvy passed through Omsk in 1877, General Kaznakoff gave him some stone gouges, and hatchets, which were sent to the Saint-Germain Museum in Paris. They were discovered at Samarova, where the Irtysh flows into the Obi, and I am under the impression that those I saw belonged to the same find. I could not, however, hear of any objects of a like character having been found in the territory of the Kirghese, the Russians telling me, in reply to my inquiries, that the Kirghese civilization is of so primitive a character, and they have learned to manufacture so little for themselves, that they might, in a fashion, be said to be still living in the stone age.

Our morning's business over, we went to dine with General Kurbanofsky, properly Governor of Akmo-linsk, but just then acting as Governor-General—the late one, General Kaznakoff, having gone away ill, and the new one, General Kolpakovsky, not having as yet arrived. Among my fellow-guests at dinner was the Government architect, who spoke English like a native. He had been to London for nine days, and

was one of the very few Russians I have ever met who was not pleased therewith. I could not get from him a good word for any of our buildings but Westminster Abbey, and he seemed disappointed with London as a whole. A fine view of the Steppe on the left bank of the Irtysh was obtained from the Governor's verandah, and from thence I first sighted a Kirghese *aul*, or collection of tents, of which, as we travelled south, we were to see so many.

On leaving the Governor's house we called on the Lutheran director of the post-office, Mr. De Schiemann, who had removed here from Vologda at a cost, he ruefully said, of £70, but which struck me as remarkably cheap for bringing one's effects a distance of 3,000 miles. I inquired for Pastor Hirtz, the only Protestant minister, if I mistake not, in all Russian Central Asia, for I wished to leave with him some Finnish tracts forwarded to me by Miss Alba Hellmann, of Wasa; but he was not at home. I heard the minister spoken well of for his ability in preaching, in recognition of which he wears a gold cross conferred by the consistorium. Before leaving Omsk I packed a box of books to be sent by Mr. Ignatoff's agent to the Governor of Tobolsk, and also made up four other parcels, and sent them through Mr. Kossagovsky to the Industrial Asylum; to General Kurbanofsky, for the supply of the prisons, hospitals, schools, etc., of his province of Akmolinsk; and other two for the military and civil prisons at Omsk.

Everyone during my stay in the town was on the *qui vive*, awaiting the arrival of General Kolpakovsky, and I expected to be obliged to wait too. My business, however, sped so well, and his Excellency was reported to be so far off, that I determined to start on the evening of the 18th August, and meet him, if possible, at Pavlodar. I was too well acquainted with the "rule of the road" to be ignorant of the value of local recommendations to the post-masters, and I had

heard dismal accounts of the difficulties of getting horses in some parts of the Steppe. I made bold, therefore, to ask of General Kurbanofsky for a Crown *podorojna*, which would give me a prior claim to the postal steeds. The General, however, as I was told, was a great stickler for the law, and he replied that he had no power to give me such a *podorojna*, unless I was travelling in the service of the Government, which, I believe, was true legally, though in previous years I had almost always been favoured with what I now asked for. I had, therefore, to purchase an ordinary *podorojna*, for which, to Semipolatsinsk, I paid £1 9s. 3*d.*, but in addition the General obtained a letter for me from the post-master to the station-keepers, which helped me famously. I was unable to get everything in readiness until the morning of the 19th, when we learned that our interests were being looked after by postilions, who came to tell us that Cossacks had more than once been sent to them by the police-master to see that we were not delayed. Some of our acquaintances called to bid us farewell, and Mr. Kossagovsky, in Russian fashion, accompanied us on horseback for some few miles out of the town.

We had now before us a drive of nearly 500 miles to Semipolatsinsk, in the course of which we expected to change horses 31 times at a like number of stations, the first two introducing us to Cossack life. The Cossack population of the provinces of Akmolinsk and Semipolatsinsk in 1879 was located in 149 settlements, and made up of 87,723 combatants, and 99,139 other persons. About 25,000 combatants, and a further population of 28,000, were living in 54 settlements, called the "Irtish line." They were originally settled along the river, to serve as a protection against the inroads of the Kirghese, a plan similar to one I saw in 1879 along the right bank of the Ussuri. The approaches of the Kirghese are now no longer to be feared, so that these Cossacks have practically lost

their local *raison d'être*, but Russia has by their means colonized a fruitful terrain, and planted a succession of villages, many of which have upwards of 400 inhabitants, some of them even possessing churches.

We travelled well at setting out, covering in our first 22 hours 138 miles, and one stage of 12 miles was accomplished in a little less than the hour. The post-master's letter doubtless helped us to some extent, but there was an amiability about the Cossack station-masters and *yemstchiks*, or postilions, who needed little persuasion to do their best. At each station I offered Scriptures for sale and distributed tracts, the former of which were gladly purchased, and the latter thankfully received. I suppose it was this at the second station that caused the Cossacks to offer me gratis some of their horse-hair rope that I wanted to buy, and for which, when I insisted on payment, they took only the trifling sum of 4*d.* At Cherlakovsk, the seventh station, a caravan route branches off to the town of Akmolinsk, and at Urlyutyupsk, the ninth station, 120 miles from Omsk, we passed out of the Akmolinsk into the Semipolatsinsk government.

We were now well on to the Steppe, whose straight unbroken horizon so frequently reminds one of the ocean. The soil is yielding, stoneless, and sandy, thus making the smoothest of roads, on which our horses dashed along. The country is nearly treeless, and the ground almost without vegetation, so that one had only to picture the surface covered with snow to see the necessity for the roadside wickerwork erections to mark the route in winter. In summer the steppe is not a grass-covered flat, for the verdure is found only in patches, and then forms no turf, but grows, like the bunch or buffalo grass of the prairie, in separate clumps, although the steppe grass is longer. For great distances the steppe is covered with thickets of Meadow-sweet.

Here and there too are gooseberry bushes, inter-

mixed with feeble-looking birches, generally less than five feet high, whilst everywhere, when the road approaches the Irtysh, we catch sight on the opposite bank of a more or less extensive vegetation of well-grown trees, such as willows, poplars, oaks, birches, and pines. Alongside the river are frequently found hill-like chains of sand resembling downs, with wild oats and other grasses. Another characteristic of the steppe is seen in numerous ponds and lakes, unconnected by streams. They are for the most part isolated, and, what is more remarkable, are in some cases filled with sweet, in others with salt or brackish, water. Thus it happens in their neighbourhood that one meets now with sandy downs, and then with those deposits of salt that have been caused by evaporation, and frequently impart to the ground the appearance of hoar frost or snow.

We had left Omsk at noon on the 19th, and on the morning of the 21st we arrived at Pavlodar, accomplishing the 260 miles in 44 hours. Here we found no less than 45 horses reserved for the Governor-General, whose coming was watched for hourly. We had therefore nothing to do but to wait, and to congratulate ourselves in having to do so at such an excellent station. All along the line, however, the Cossack post-stations had been good, reminding me of the best of those in Siberia, which are comfortable indeed compared with the hovels one met with further south. The Cossack stations were clean, the floors sometimes painted, and the rooms not unfrequently beautified with flowers and creepers, especially ivy. There were, of course, the usual ugly but often expensive pictures of saints in the corners of the guest-rooms, and the miserable Moscow pictures, and portraits of the Imperial family and other notables. These I tried to outshine by nailing to the wall, usually under the *ikon*, a handsome engraving representing the return of the Prodigal Son, with the story in Russ printed around, similar to those I

nailed up in so many of the post-houses throughout Siberia.

This operation constantly opened up the way for the sale of my books, and did so with the post-master at Pavlodar. He was a man evidently well-to-do, as seen by the Central Asian carpets hung on the walls, and a silk *khalat* in which, with lordly gait, he walked about. I brought to his notice a handful of New Testaments, Gospels, Psalms, etc., at various prices, from which he might take his choice; but, like a man of means, he bought the lot at a stroke for his son, about whose education he was evidently solicitous. There was a young woman bustling about the premises, whom I took to be his daughter, at work, indeed, but dressed better than an ordinary peasant, as also was the wife, whom we were glad to ask to prepare us some dinner. She brought soup, cutlets, and pancakes, with a melon for dessert; and if we had not cause to complain of such fare in the wilderness, we had still less reason to murmur at the charges. I have already mentioned the cheapness of provisions on the steamer between Tiumen and Omsk, where my steward's bill for the best food the ship provided, and plenty of it, for two persons for 7 days amounted to only 35s.; but the prices of food in the Steppe appeared to outdo even this, for I copied, in one of the post-stations, a scale of charges as follows: "Use of samovar, 2½d.; portion of bread, 2½d.; pair of chickens, 6d.; a cooked fowl, 10d.; quart of milk, 1¼d., and 10 eggs for 4d."

But we had business other than that of meeting the Governor-General. Our personal baggage and tarantass we unshipped at Omsk, but my boxes of books and the vehicle to carry them went on by steamer to Pavlodar, from which point we were to take them forward—the water being now too low to allow of the steamer proceeding to Semipolatsk. When the boxes arrived at the post-station, I was

unexpectedly constrained to unpack them. I have alluded to the earnest and doubtless well-meant advice given me at Omsk, to attempt no effort of a religious character among the Muhammadans. To the same effect I was counselled by a General on the Urals, who deprecated what he called my "propaganda" among them, and said the mullahs were fanatical. "General Kaufmann," he added, "would not allow our own missionaries even to attempt any work among the Muhammadans, and if you do anything of the kind you are likely to get yourself into trouble and us too." Now, so far as the latter result was likely to ensue, I was, of course, unwilling to do anything that might embroil the Russians, especially after the gracious manner in which they had allowed me to go where I pleased. But as for my own skin, I felt I was the keeper of that, and I doubted if there were sufficient cause for alarm. Besides which *modus est in rebus*, and I could not help thinking there was some *via media* between forcing upon the conquered the religion of the conquerors, as the Muhammadans have loved in all ages to do, and standing aloof from them, attempting nothing whatever for their spiritual good. As I said to my military adviser, "I can offer them my books, and if they do not choose to accept them, I have only to pass on." Accordingly I began to practise my principles in Omsk, the first town at which I stopped, having any considerable number of Kirghese. One of the mullahs was informed that I wished to see the mosque, after the inspection of which I placed in his hand a Kirghese New Testament, and asked whether he could read it. When I perceived that he could do so, though apparently not very well, I asked if he would accept it as a souvenir of my visit. He replied that he was not sure whether it was a proper book to be in such a building, and hesitated; but whether he thought I intended it for use among other service books of the mosque, or

whether he was in fear of his interpreter, who spoke Russian, I am not clear. In any case he did not return the book, and I was content to leave it with him for further study. My next attempt was at Pavlodar, where, as I offered my Russian books to the post-master, there happened to be a Kirghese standing by. I therefore offered to sell him a New Testament in his own tongue, but he intimated that he could not read, and left the room—to tell his co-religionists, I suppose, for in a few minutes there entered two well-dressed young Tatars inquiring eagerly for the book. I placed it in the hands of one of them, and he speedily asked if I would sell him several. How many did he want? I asked. Well, he said, he would purchase ten; which was a tenth of all I had, so that I preferred to sell him less than this number; and from that time forward I had not the least trouble in selling my Kirghese Testaments at catalogue price. A second couple of Muhammadans came to the station to inquire for books other than the New Testament, and within a few hours, further on the road, a New Testament was *bought* by a mullah!

Whilst waiting for the Governor I busied myself with my pen—for there was little in Pavlodar to merit attention. It is called a “town” of some 1,300 inhabitants, and serves for a landing-place midway between Semipolatsinsk and Omsk. I may mention, however, that from hence there goes off a post carriage road into the heart of the Kirghese steppe in the direction of Baian-aul about 120 miles, and Karkaraly 100 miles further. This district is interesting to the mineralogist, more particularly from the occurrence of the rare *Dioplas*, or copper emeralds, that are met with in beautiful crystals of an intense emerald green colour, but only, it seems, near Altyn-tube, about 70 miles from Karkaraly. The Russians denominate the *Dioplas* “*Aschirka*,” after their discoverer Aschirit, a native of Tashkend.

All the way hither from Tiumen, there had been following us, more or less closely, a company of soldiers, towed in a barge by our steamer to Omsk, and now brought forward to Pavlodar, whence they were to march into Turkistan. Large numbers of young recruits are every year thus sent to Tashkend, and one person in Tiumen mentioned to me significantly that he saw many soldiers going there, but few coming back. This I thought afterwards was largely accounted for by a somewhat heavy mortality, and also from the fact that Russian labour being scarce in Central Asia, and their return home not being without difficulties, they prefer to stay in the warmer climate to which military duty has introduced them.

I believe the soldiers at Pavlodar were to be inspected by the Governor-General on his arrival, for which, however, we discovered in the afternoon that we need not wait, as tidings came to the post-master relative to his Excellency's whereabouts, and knowing that he did not usually travel at night, we were told that we might have the necessary horses for our two vehicles, proceed, and meet the General some stations ahead. Accordingly we set out towards evening, and after driving through the night a distance of 50 miles, found ourselves in the early morning at Cherna, where, notwithstanding the rain, the people were in the white heat of expectation awaiting the Governor-General. The post-house was brushed up to its maximum presentability, and everyone was getting more and more excited. Some unhappy man in the room adjoining ours, who seemed to be out of the fun, was talking loudly and boastfully what *he* would do under the circumstances, whilst every man, woman, and child in the hamlet appeared to have turned out to bear a part in providing or changing horses, or to perform the all-important business of "looking on." It was the first time General Kolpakovsky, as Governor-General, had passed, and who could resist the desire to get a

peep at the Viceroy? As for our humble selves, we for the time of course, were nobodies, and I was content to do my best, under difficulties, to procure for myself a clean face and hands, from my india-rubber basin, under a shed in the yard. Presently two outriders dashed into the village, as if on their speed depended their lives.

And now there was hurrying to and fro, shouting, talking, haranguing, and bawling, whilst I, with the calmest nerves I could command, took up my stand in the guest-room. At last appeared the first carriage of the viceregal *cortège*,—a tarantass like our own—then a second, a third, a fourth, and so on to the eleventh, to each of which fresh horses had to be attached in an incredibly few minutes. Soon there walked into the station a youth, who I was told was an aide-de-camp. To him I addressed myself in French, explaining who I was, and what I wanted of the Governor-General. He replied that his father was coming in, and would speak to me. Unfortunately for me, his Excellency had not enjoyed the education he was giving to his sons; for he was one of those Turkistan officers who had risen from the ranks to the highest position and respect, like another I afterwards met, but who also had to speak to me through his interpreter. Another son entered the post-house with his father, and interpreted for me in French, with an ability that I thought I had never seen excelled. The General had heard of my coming, and expected to see me at Pavlodar. I explained that I was anxious to get on as fast as possible, and presented a letter from the Minister of the Interior, accompanying it with a request that I might be furnished with a “courier,” or a “Crown” *podorojna*, and be saved the possibility of coming to a standstill in the Steppe for want of horses.

Nothing could have been kinder than his Excellency's attention in listening to all I had to say, and

promising to telegraph along my route to facilitate my journey. I hardly supposed that he could give me a formal letter during this few minutes' stay at the post-station; but I had provided writing materials, paper, ink and cards, even to a stylographic pen, with which the General wrote on his own card that all and sundry were to show us attention, and accord assistance if needed. This was to serve us to Semipolatinsk, and when I reached there I found awaiting me this magnanimous telegram:—

“ Recommendation to local authorities.

“ I desire that all administrative authorities and postal contractors in the general government of the Steppe show hospitality, provide interpreters and guides, and help forward without delay the English traveller, Pastor Lansdell, who is travelling through the Semirechia oblast to Kuldja and Turkistan.

“ (Signed) Governor-General

“ LIEUT.-GEN. KOLPAKOVSKY.”

Gentlemen of England, who live at home at ease, or who, when they voyage to the south of France, telegraph to Paris for compartments reserved, and write to the *Times* if they are not satisfied,—velvet-cushion travellers such as these can only feebly appreciate the value of such a telegram in the steppes of Central Asia. To say that it was worth its weight in gold is only faint praise; but perhaps I had better not be too lavish of my superlatives here, because, when returning to the same subject, I shall want them further on. Suffice it now to say that, after a hearty shake of the hand and the kindest of farewells, the General sped on his way, but not before he had thoughtfully remembered that he was taking away more than 40 horses, which might have left us high and dry, had he not bade the *starosta* to supply our wants, and send us on as quickly as possible. This magic word exalted us speedily from nobodies to somebodies, and the men dashed at our

vehicles to equip them for our immediate departure, as if they thought we were going to tear after the Governor with the rest.

We now posted on to the next station, Lebyaj, where the Viceroy had spent the night, and where, in the guest-room of the station, the blooming oleanders, and flowers in tubs and pots, bore witness to the welcome his hosts had provided. At this point another caravan route crossed our road, extending on the right to the Russian colony of Karkaraly, and by dusk we found ourselves three stations further on, at Semiyarsk, where there was just light enough to see the outlines of a somewhat pretentious mosque, no longer used. At this station also was another caravan route joining that from Lebyaj. We posted on through the night, or at least wished to do so, but on arriving at the next station the horses were found to be turned out for the night, and to collect them from a pasture where hurdles and bounds are unknown was not to be done in a minute. For five hours we had to wait (my longest delay, let me thankfully add, that I anywhere experienced in the Steppe), during which it seemed utterly vain to storm at the post-master, whose heart and conscience were doubtless hardened, for his complaint book was full of the lamentations and threats of preceding travellers.

We breakfasted at Cheremkhovsk, and found that the character of the landscape had completely changed. Post-horses failed us again at Dolonsk, but by paying extra we were able to hire private steeds, though by reason of the sandiness of the road we were obliged to take four horses for each conveyance; and when we reached Semipolatsk, our four days' drive of 482 miles, including refreshments, the hire of 134 horses, and gratuities to each of 44 drivers, had cost us less than £6. We arrived at midnight, and speedily found ourselves in comfortable quarters at Stepanof's hotel.

CHAPTER V.

FROM SEMIPOLATINSK TO SERGIOPOL.

“Semipolatsinsk” : its etymology, situation, and meteorology.—Call on Governor.—Visits to prison and asylum.—Schools.—Post Office statistics.—Trade.—Our start delayed.—Departure, roads, and posting service.—Sunday at Sergiopol.—Distribution of books from the capital and onwards.—Antiquities and remarkable skulls.—Mineral deposits.—A previous English traveller.—Lake Ala-Kul : its aspect, ornithology, and fish.—The Central Asian “Kulan.”

THE town of Semipolatsinsk (pronounced Semipalatinsk), at which I arrived on the 24th August, derives its name from “Sempalati”—seven palaces or buildings, the ruins of which were seen in 1734 by Gmelin, who called the place “Sempalatnaya-Krepost,” or fortress. These buildings had served as temples for the Kalmuks, and one of them still contained two idols of bears, and on the walls of another were partially discerned representations of men, whilst not far distant in the valley of Ablaitkit were found the ruins of another temple of Buddhist origin. The present Russian town stands on the lofty right bank of the Irtysh, 11 miles from the original site, now called “Old Semipolatsinsk,” my last post-station, from which one or more migrations had been found necessary by reason of the eating away of the river’s bank, and the encroachments of the sand-dunes. It has a public garden with 14 fountains. On the left bank stands the rare spectacle of a Kirghese town, where these settled children of the desert dwell in

houses of wood, with curtained windows. Surrounded by a desert of sand, Semipolatsk has all the disadvantages of a continental climate, with few corresponding advantages. The Russians established here a meteorological station, where, as in other stations in Central Asia, observations were recorded thrice daily—at seven, one, and nine o'clock.

It was not my intention to stay longer in Semipolatsk than was necessary, and I accordingly sallied forth betimes in the morning on the ordinary Russian droshky to pay my respects to the Governor, General Protzenko. His Excellency had already heard of me, and was prepared to help me in every way possible, regretting only that his household was all but broken up, because he was on the point of departure to a distant portion of his province. He gave me permission to visit the prison, where we found an Afghan prisoner. Then we made our way to a small "*priool*" or asylum, which contained only 11 children and 3 old men and women, who were maintained by a ladies' society for the care of the poor. During the preceding year 3 girls and 4 old people had left the institution, to be received by their relations or by tradespeople as apprentices. It was interesting to find this little almshouse so far away in the heart of Asia, and it spoke well for the prosperity of the capital, that, although the funds for maintaining it were ample, yet there were few needing such a refuge.

After our visit to the asylum we called on Mr. Michaelis, who was learned in statistics respecting the province, and then upon a gentleman given to scientific pursuits, after which we made our way to the post and telegraphic office, to find awaiting me the valuable telegram (already alluded to) from General Kolpakovsky. The last opportunity we should have for some time to purchase post cards and stamps was in this head office of the province. Some idea of the postal affairs may be formed from the fact that in its 13 post-offices

and stations for the reception of correspondence £1,504 were expended for maintenance and administrative expenses, and £3,771 received.

The buildings of Semipolatsinsk did not strike me as remarkable. There were, however, many large warehouses, a reminder of the fact that the town was long celebrated for its commercial relations with Central Asia. The Russian and Tatar merchants of Semipolatsinsk sell in the bazaars tea, sugar, and other



A KIRGHESSE CAMEL-CART.

groceries, cotton stuffs, Chinese silks, porcelain, furs, wax, and honey. The principal trade is carried on in winter, when the Cossacks and peasants come in from the neighbouring districts, bringing skins, ropes, and other produce. The Kirghese also—some on horseback, and others in camel-carts—bring cattle and camels'-hair, which they dispose of to purchase grain, flour, tobacco, iron ware, and wooden boxes.

After this flourish of trumpets respecting the trade

of the capital, it will sound somewhat strange that our departure was delayed by reason of our being unable to purchase throughout the town a sufficiency of white bread. Foreseeing that we should have to travel many miles before we could reckon on the possibility of replenishing our stores, we purchased sundry provisions, leaving the article of bread to the last, so that it might be new; but we could find only one baker of white bread, a German, who inveighed against the badness of the local flour, and said that he should leave the place. He could promise no supplies till next morning, and thus we were prevented starting on Thursday night. The incident tended, however, to evoke a well-known trait of Russian character. The Governor-General's telegram commended me not only to the good offices in general, but also to the "hospitality" of the authorities, and this proved to be no empty form, for when in the evening, after a call from Mr. Michaelis, General Protzenko did me the honour of a visit, and I mentioned that we were delayed for lack of bread, his Excellency expressed his regret that his own *cuisine* was already packed and started, and asked Colonel Ilyinsky, chief of the staff, to come to the rescue. We had already tried to purchase from one or two private persons, but they had only sufficient bread for the day. Early next morning, however, good things were showered upon us in abundance. Not only did the baker bring his tale of loaves, but Mr. Michaelis added to their number, and Colonel Ilyinski himself brought us bread, butter, cakes, and jam, and wished us *bon voyage*!

At half-past nine, therefore, with a full commissariat, we started for Sergiopol, a distance of 180 miles, comprising 11 stations and 10 changes of horses, being accompanied by a subordinate sent by the police-master to see us safely over the Irtish.

I had heard dismal complaints of the road south of Semipolatsk, owing to the paucity of horses. Even

in the official report for 1881 it appeared that 136 complaints had been lodged at the stations by passengers, and it was said that General Kolpakovsky himself had found the posting accommodation in the southern Steppe not to his liking. This, no doubt, was partly owing to the increased traffic consequent upon the breaking down of the postal service from Orenburg to Tashkend, which caused the post to be brought all round by the Irtysh, and put undue strain on the local arrangements.

It was to me, however, a source of great comfort, that I was now kindly supplied with a Crown podorojna, so that I might fairly reckon upon doing as well as could be expected under the circumstances. During the first 24 hours we covered 127 miles. The road to Sergiopol lay almost due south from Semipolatsinsk, and for the first two stations presented a bare landscape, relieved only here and there by a few *auls* or collections of tents, and cattle of the Kirghese. Arkalyksk stood in the middle of a desert, at an altitude of 950 feet. Afterwards we passed on over vast plains without a sign of life, and across a low range of hills, rising to 1,280 feet.

We descended to 1,000 feet at Ashchikulsk, and rose to 1,300 at Djertatsk, which we reached in the evening, and then posted on through the night past Kazyl-Mulinsk, 1,450 feet high, and then gradually mounted to 1,700 feet at Arkadskiy (or Arcat). In the very early dawn we passed the seventh station, and breakfasted at the eighth, after which the road was so intolerably dusty that we sometimes could not see the horses' heads. In the afternoon we approached Altyn-Kalat, the frontier station between the provinces of Semipolatsinsk and Semirechia. Count Waldburg-Zeil computed its height to be 2,133 feet, so that since leaving Semipolatsinsk, 750 feet high, we had ascended 1,400 feet, and had reached the watershed of the Chingiz-Tau, the western spur of the Tarbagatai,

which mountains send the rivers flowing north into the Zaisan and Irtish, and those flowing south into Lakes Balkhash and Ala-Kul. One of these latter, however, the Ayaguz, has small pretensions in summer to a river, for Sevier going to bathe therein found the water only ankle-deep.

On reaching Sergiopol, on the banks of the Ayaguz and surrounded by sands, we found that the good offices of the Governor-General had preceded us in the form of a telegram, that horses should be in readiness. It was Saturday night, however, and I had determined to spend the Sunday there, expecting a larger town than it afterwards proved to be, and intending to visit the hospital and prison. Having, therefore, called upon the chief military authority overnight, we slept at the post-house, and went after breakfast to see the military hospital, prison, and barracks. In this last establishment I was pleased to find a modest library of what seemed to me rather antiquated Russian books, probably the remains of former days, when Sergiopol had greater military significance than now.

I was glad to add thereto some copies of the Scriptures and other publications, some of which I also distributed in the hospital and prison. News of this spread, and I was speedily visited first by the Russian priest, who came to buy a Kirghese New Testament to present to the mullah, and then by a Cossack school-mistress, in pretty Russian costume, and wearing the national head-dress known as the *kokoshnik*, with which I fell in love; so, when the young lady's purchases were completed, I ventured to ask her to sell it to me for a curiosity. She gracefully declined my request, but offered it as a gift. Accordingly, I made up its value in printed matter, which here I found highly prized, as everywhere else along my route.

At Semipolatsinsk I could not learn that the Governor had received any of the books I sent in 1879 to the Governor-General Kaznakoff for the prisons and

hospitals of the Semipolatsinsk government. General Protzenko, however, was willing to accept a New Testament for each room of every prison and hospital throughout his province, estimating the net number at about 210 rooms in all, after making allowance for the number of Kirghese prisoners and patients who could not read Russ. With the Moslems the Governor did not like to attempt much, but consented to accept 10 copies of the Kirghese New Testament, to be used as opportunity might serve. Accordingly I sent with these 100 New Testaments, 65 Gospels, and 50 Psalms in Russ, some German, Hebrew, and Polish Scriptures, and about 400 tracts, etc. This done, I repacked some of my boxes, so as to have as few as possible on my second conveyance. At the stations as we came along I continued my plan of nailing up in the post-houses the engraving of the "Prodigal Son," and offering my books for sale. Blessings indeed they must have been, I should think, in these solitary houses in the wilderness, and the post-masters seemed so to regard them. At the last station before Semipolatsinsk an old man said, "The Lord must have sent these books for us," and his delight was great at getting them. Between Semipolatsinsk and Sergiopol almost every post-master purchased books, and some bought at a stroke all the selection I offered, as at Uluguzk and Uzun-Bulak. Even this did not satisfy my customer at Altyn-Kalat, for he wanted another rouble's worth.

The Russians took up their position at Sergiopol, previously called Ayaguz, and subsequently named after Sergius, a younger son of the Emperor, in 1831, since which date, their frontier having advanced southwards, the place has greatly declined in importance. The inhabitants number 1,000. The town is situated within sight of, but at some distance from, the post-station, near which is the fortress containing the church, the house of the *nachalnik*, or chief, and the barracks.

During my short stay at Sergiopol I heard of a fellow-

countryman, Mr. Delmar Morgan, who has laid the English public under obligations by his many translations from the Russian. He had preceded me in 1880 to Sergiopol, where, arriving early in April, he was detained for three weeks by the impassable state of the roads. Not till the 6th of that month did the water-fowl begin to arrive in the lagoons on the left bank of the Ayaguz, and opposite the town the ice of the river did not move till the 14th. He was then preparing to start for the Russian frontier town of Bakhta, opposite Chuguchak, when he was hindered by a telegram summoning him to Vierny. The Bakhta station is probably the best starting-point for Lake Ala-Kul, the third largest lake in Central Asia, which is thought to have been joined at one time to the Balkhash, but is now an entirely distinct basin without effluent.

Dr. Finsch has given the best account I have met with of the fauna on the shores of this lake, and of the district through which he passed. Along the post-road in autumn I saw but few birds or living creatures of any kind, but his more practised eye discerned the Red-footed and two other Falcons, Great Buzzards, and Harriers. Wheat-ears were to be seen everywhere on the stone-covered hill-tops, whilst in the thickets of *Spiræa* the Bluethroats were building their nests. The cry of the Quail was heard on every side, as well as the note of the Cuckoo, whilst high in the air fluttered the Chimney Swallows, the Skylark, and, most common, though most remarkable of all, the Black Lark, whose uniform velvet black plumage, pale yellow beak, and large size make it both remarkable and interesting. It loves to sit on stones by the roadside, or perch on the bushes, with drooping wings and tail erect, singing there, as well as in the air, its melodious song. When in flight it appears even more remarkable than when sitting, for in this respect it differs from other larks. Clapping together the points of its wings, and whipping about, now regularly and then in

an irregular manner, its flight may be likened to that of a bat.

Some of the species of the fish taken by Dr. Finsch in the Ala-Kul were new to him. That of the commonest occurrence was a species of Perch, which grows to the length of a foot or more; then the "*Marinka*," a species belonging to the group of Barbels; and, further, two species of Loaches. The Perch were greedily eaten by the Cossacks and Kirghese, but the *Marinka*, supposed to be poisonous, were thrown aside. Dr. Finsch, however, boiled a fine specimen, two feet long, and ate of it (the roe excepted) with enjoyment, and without ill-effects. In fact, the meat of this species is generally used as food in Central Asia, and sells in Kopal for a halfpenny per pound.

Before taking leave of the fauna of the Ala-Kul district, mention must be made among Mammalia of Arctic Hares, the Kara-biruk Antelope, the Ibex, the Water Shrew, the Prickly Hog, and the Wild Ass. This last is found in several parts of the Central Asian steppes; "*Kulan*" is the name by which the animal is known to the Kirghese. The "*Kiang*" from Upper Tibet would appear to be nearly related, although larger. The Kulan is said to be untamable, but Dr. Finsch had the opportunity at Omsk of describing and sketching two specimens that had been received from the Bekpak-Dala Steppe when quite young, and had then been suckled by a young mare. Both the wild animals became so accustomed to this new phase of existence, that they grazed with her and other horses, and although the one was two years old and the other as much as three years, they still had recourse to the paps of their foster mother.

Having thus brought my readers to the frontiers of the Semirechia province at Sergiopol, I shall now proceed on my journey southwards.

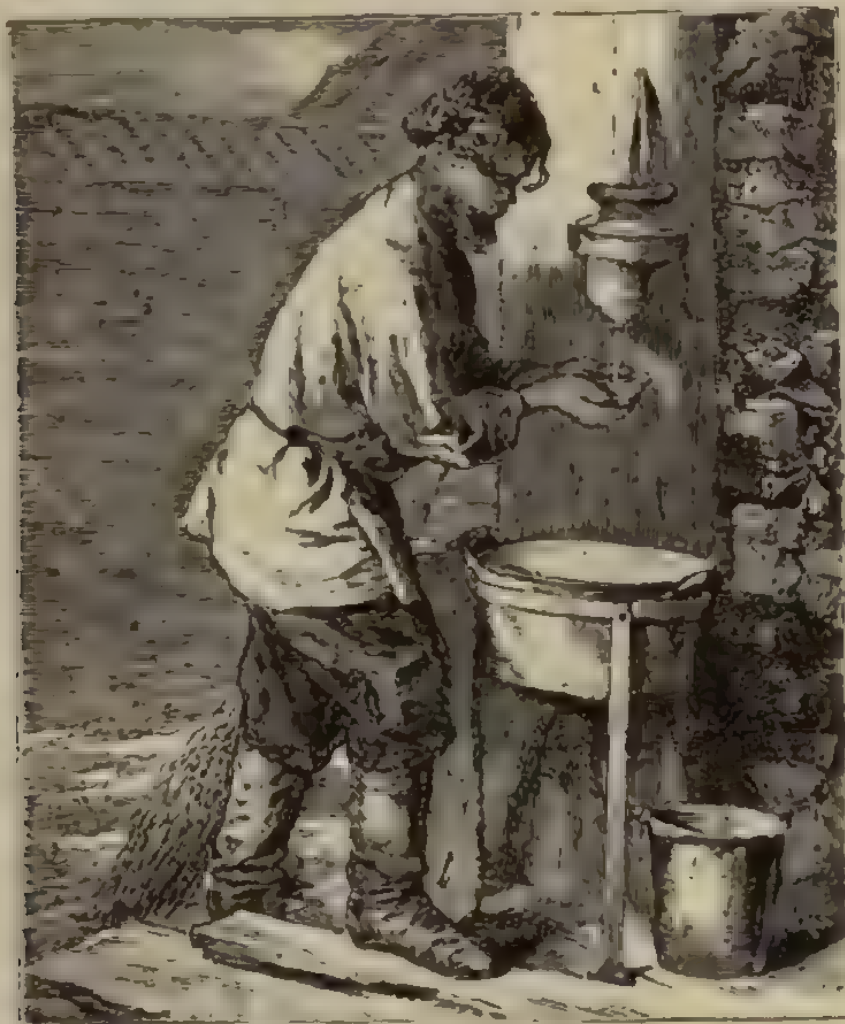
CHAPTER VI.

FROM SERGIOPOL TO ALTYN-IMMEL.

Departure from Sergiopol.—Miserable station at Djus Agach.—Desiccated lake-bed near Ala-Kul.—Arganatinsk.—View of Lake Balkhash.—“Ehbi” wind and sandstorm.—Lepsinsk station.—Accelerated posting.—Branch road to Lepsinsk colony.—Arasan sulphur baths.—Kopal.—Arrival at Altyn-Immel.

ON trotting out of Sergiopol towards evening on the 27th of August, the road lay along the valley of the river, that gave its name to our first station, Middle Ayaguz, where we drank tea, and then pushed on to Taldi-Kuduk. Here a few soldiers, with a handful of prisoners on the march, had put up for the night, the soldiers stretching themselves on the ground in Central Asian fashion outside the post-house. At the first station the post-master bought the whole of the books I offered for his selection, and now these soldiers readily purchased more; after which, our horses being ready, we posted all night, passed Kyzyl-Kiy and Little Ayaguz, and in the morning reached Djus Agach. It was a picket of the most desolate character—the most miserable station we had seen—a tumbledown house in the desert. Here we breakfasted, and took our morning wash, but both under difficulties. One of the inconveniences of post travelling in Asiatic Russia is the absence of good lavatory accommodation. The common method among the Russian peasants of washing the hands is to

place them beneath a bowl of water fixed at a height, out of which a stream trickles. One accustomed, therefore, to the orthodox "tub" wherein to splash about finds himself inconveniently restricted in his toilet. Moreover, as these washing contrivances in Asia are frequently placed out of doors in the yard, it will be understood what a comfort it was to have brought with me an indiarubber basin. Some travellers had



A POST-HOUSE "CHAMBRE DE TOILETTE."

arrived before us—an officer, I think, and his wife—who consequently occupied the guest-chamber; and, there being no room for us in the inn, the post-mistress brought the samovar outside the stable and spread for us a table in the wilderness. All around was a barren steppe, without a blade of vegetation the horses could eat. It was truly pitiable to see them crawling around us almost starved. It appeared that their usual supply of corn had not been brought, and the poor creatures were trying to pick up the handfuls of

chaff lying about. I offered one of them a piece of white bread, but he would not eat it, and I began to wonder how we should get on. It was needless to ask whether the post-master had horses. There were plenty before us, but they were reputed to be sick, and they certainly looked so. Nor did they possess at this station tar enough to lubricate the wheels of our wagonette. A fine place, truly, to be "stuck fast" at the mercy of a Cossack post-master till his horses could be fattened for work! But, most fortunately, the news of our coming had preceded us, and they said that we should have horses.

And so we did, though they were anything but fiery steeds to pull us over the next stage, which was the worst we had had, the road lying sometimes on rocky hillocks, and sometimes over sand, in which the wheels occasionally stuck. Driver and fares accordingly descended, and walked, which gave us the opportunity of examining the tall dry *assafœtida* plants by the side of the track, and catching a few butterflies and dragonflies. But even in this fashion our sorry horses made slow work of it. We were, however, passing over ground of geographical interest, it being none other than what is believed to have been the dry bed of a sheet of water, connecting what are now the lakes Balkhash and Ala-Kul.

A drive of 20 miles from Djus Agach, the latter portion of which was over rising rocky ground, brought us to Arganatinsk. By this time the sun was at its meridian, and the thermometer in the tarantass rose to 85°. The post-house stood, according to my aneroid, at 1,600 feet above the sea, and on either side rose two bare rocky hills covered with loose shingle, up one of which I had determined to climb, to have the satisfaction of getting a peep, 20 miles off, at the famous Lake Balkhash. This lake was called by the Kalmuks *Balkatsi Nor*, Great Lake, and by the Kirghese *Ak-Denghis*. Many Kirghese pass

the winter on the sandy shore, but the surface yields only a limited pasturage for their numerous flocks.

As I stood at Arganatinsk, on the top of the hill, whither I had clambered 400 feet, I was surrounded with deserts that, with clay beds, salt steppes, and moving sands, seemed to show that the Balkhash had once been larger than at present. In front of me, as I looked towards the lake, was the Uchakty Kum, and behind, the Niiaz-, the Sary-, and the Tash-kara Kum.



THE PICKET POST-STATION AT ARGANATINSK.

Fortunately our road crossed directly no one of these, but we fell in that night with one of their local phenomena. At the next station they gave us four sorry horses, and, what was worse, a sleepy Kirghese driver, whom I caught several times nodding on the box. He understood no Russian, so I more than once conveyed to him my meaning by a thump in the back, whereupon he looked round as if I were unfairly disturbing his slumbers. At last, finding it useless to vex my impetuous soul, I resigned myself to fate and tried to

sleep, for night had well set in. There came puffing into the carriage, however, a dry, hot wind, the like to which I had never experienced before. My ordinary clothes were too hot, and I would fain have lifted the curtain and let down the apron, but the heavens lowered, and the wind so stirred up the sand that I wondered what manner of thing was going to happen. I have since learned that frequent sandstorms, of the character of snowdrifts, but far more dangerous, occur on these steppes about the Balkhash, and that they sometimes rage for several days. Mr. Delmar Morgan speaks of the "Ehbi" wind that blows from the south-east towards the Ala-Kul, and is sometimes so violent as to have the force of a hurricane. It raises clouds of snow and sand, and has been known to bury solitary travellers, and, it is said, villages also.

Whether I had come across a modified specimen of the "Ehbi" wind I know not, but on our arrival in the early morning at Lépsinsk, we saw the sand blowing in such fashion as I had never before witnessed it. To go only from the carriage into the post-house, the gritty element dashed most disagreeably into the face, mouth, and eyes, and covered us as effectually with sand as if we had rolled in it. This was bad enough, but, to make matters a little worse, our luggage wagonette was nowhere to be seen. We had foolishly allowed the driver to follow us instead of insisting that he should go on ahead, and now we were to pay the penalty. I urged that our man should go back to see if the concern had broken down, and, if so, give the driver help. But he did not seem to consider that a part of his duty. After waiting some time we declared that we would make complaint of the delay, and at last by bribes or threats, or perhaps both, our man was moved and set off on horseback.

The post-station was not one of the most cheerful, for it lacked the presence of one of the gentler sex, and the household affairs of our bachelor or widower

post-master appeared all higgledy-piggledy. I sighted, however, a water-melon, which he allowed me to buy, and, with this added to our own resources, we made one if not two meals before the luggage arrived. Presently the post-master said that one of his Kirghese workmen, from the top of the stable, thought he could see something moving on the road about 8 miles off, a feat I should have doubted had I not heard of the keen sight of these sons of the desert. At last our man arrived, and explained that the horses in the wagonette were so poor and thin that it had been necessary to carry corn to bait them half-way, and that the driver, having put food before his beasts, had gone off to sleep, and was quietly reposing by the roadside. On being aroused he was ashamed to face us, and handed over his charge to our driver, so that all we could do to the delinquent was to call down vengeance upon him, by complaining, in the book set apart for that purpose, that we had been delayed on this stage for 12 hours.

I had heard of the little station at Lepsinsk as far west as Moscow, and was requested to inquire there for a letter from a Russian colonel, a friend of my adviser, who, he said, would, if at home, find me Kirghese antiquities, or open one of the Kalmuk tumuli of the neighbourhood, and send or accompany me from the town of Lepsinsk over the Ala-Tau mountains to Lake Sairam-Nor, and in this way get me to Kuldja instead of going round the post-road. But against this spirited enterprise I was strongly warned before entering Asia, and, pressed as I was for time, I found it to be out of the question. Besides which, there was no letter awaiting me at the station, so I hastened to get forward.

A better lot of post-horses was given us at Lepsinsk, which we left with the sandstorm still blowing, and soon came to the River Lepsa, that gives its name both to the station as well as to the chief town of the district

At the next station, Baskanskiy, there were trees before the post-house, and, further on, herbage appeared with camels feeding, after which snow mountains loomed in the distance, and we crossed in a small ferry-boat the Ak-Su, a smaller and narrower river than the Lepsa, but quite as rapid. At the Ak-Su station horses were again given us, but it must not be supposed that all this came as a matter of course, for we overtook at least three officers in these picket-stations, against whom we should have had no chance in securing horses, but for the kind patronage of the Governor-General. To expedite matters still more, and finding that an *estaphet*, or mounted messenger, could be sent on ahead for such a trifle as a halfpenny a mile, I began the practice further on of sending off immediately on my arrival a boy to the next station to announce my coming, so that if the horses were turned out on the steppe, they might be brought to the stable ready to be harnessed at a moment's notice. At the Ak-Su station it poured with rain—a fact I mention only to take of those refreshing drops farewell—a long farewell, for days and weeks and months, since, if I remember rightly, we saw no more for upwards of three months—that is, till we reached the Caucasus at Poti in December.

At Abakumovskiy, the next station, we were near the mountains. From this place a post-road goes off at the foot of, and parallel to, the Ala-Tau range, a distance of 65 miles, past three stations to Lepsinsk.

On leaving Abakumovskiy we found ourselves ascending a mountain path, named the Hasfort pass, after a former Governor-General of Western Siberia, that recalled to my mind the sides of one of the Californian cañons. It was not till far on in the night that we reached the station Arasan, where I was too sleepy to see much, but I heard that the station-master was a Pole, who, understanding that I was a

foreigner, asked whether I came from Paris. What gaieties I should have seen, had it been daylight, I know not, for we were now at the fashionable bathing place of the neighbourhood. Here are hot sulphur springs (whence the name *Arasan*), much frequented in summer. There are bathing houses, a pretty garden, and a small hotel.

From Arasan we posted into a temperature uncomfortably cold, till sunrise found us, 3,900 feet above the sea, at Kopal. This town was formerly the capital of the province, and has a population of 5,000 souls. It was founded in 1841, and is finely situated in a valley. It has two schools, two churches, and a mosque, but is now on the decline, since the business formerly done in the Steppe has now been largely transferred to the new capital at Vierny. As we drove through the town before its inhabitants were astir, it looked well-built and clean. I would gladly have purchased some new white bread, but as this would have delayed us some hours, and necessity did not compel me to stop, we posted on past Ak-Ichke, and breakfasted at the next station, Sari-bulak, beyond which the way lay through tall herbage with hollyhocks. Here we met our first camel caravan and signs of animal life increased. Thus far, apart from the stations, we had not seen, I think, all the way since leaving Semipolatsk a single collection of houses that could be called a road-side village. At Vyselok-Karibulaksky was a village, and something much rarer, a church, whilst the cultivated land around recalled one of the Siberian villages, so closely planted along some of the post-roads. Here I observed, flying about, my first Hoopoe, with its gay yellow crest and speckled wings. Up to the next station, Djangyz-Agachskiy, the road had made a considerable *détour* to the west in order to skirt some spurs of the Ala-Tau, and beyond this station we ascended among barren mountains to the height of 4,500 feet above the sea. At the following station, Tsaritsin, we had reached

a point 40 miles in a straight line from Kopal, but which had cost us double that distance to attain to. Here was a telegraph station, the officer of which in his loneliness eagerly asked for books. From this point the road divides, one branch making a *détour* to the left by Kok-su and Ters-agan to Kugalin, whilst the road to the right goes to Kugalin direct. This latter way we went, starting after tea, and arriving in the middle of the night two stations further on at Altyn-Immel. So cold had it become during the last two stages that, despite my Ulster coat and Maude shawl, I had to descend from the tarantass and run to warm my feet.

Altyn-Immel to us was "Kuldja junction," where we had to re-arrange if not to "change carriages." From this point we turned off to Kuldja, which was to be our next resting-place, whither it seemed unnecessary to drag our wagonette, laden chiefly with Russian books, but rather to take the Mongolian and Chinese Scriptures, and leave the rest till our return. We arrived in the small hours of the morning at Altyn-Immel, where, being unable to find anyone in the post-house, I entered the guest-room, and began writing till daylight should bring someone on the scene. At length the post-master, a Tatar, emerged from his sleeping-place, which was none other than an empty post-cart in the yard, and afterwards, our boxes left in his charge, we hurried off towards Kuldja

CHAPTER VII.

FROM ALTYN-IMMEL TO KULDJA.

The Altyn-Immel Pass.—A sick telegraphist, and Tatar.—Nomads of the Province.—Borokhudzir nursery.—Ruined towns, and Solons.—Kuldja mining.—Chinchakhodzi.—History of Ili valley: its colonization, rebellion, and occupation by Russians.—Arrival at Kuldja.—The Ili Valley, midway between Turanian and Chinese races.—The Taranchis: their dress and habitations.—The Dungans; Solons; and Sibos.—Visit to a Sibo encampment.—Their household gods, and sick people.—The Kalmuks: their physical and mental characteristics.—Administration under Geluns and Zangs.—Kalmuk religion, family life, and marriage.

SOON after sunrise on the last day of August, we left the post-station with our stock of Chinese and Mongolian books piled on the tarantass in three cases, and thus heavily laden gradually ascended for seven miles to the gorge or pass of Yakshi-Altyn-Immel, or the "good golden saddle," so-called in distinction to the "Yaman" or "bad" Altyn-Immel pass in another part of the range. We had attained a height of about 5,500 feet above the sea, and had a fine view before us. The length of the gorge is four miles, and the road passes through clefts in the overhanging rocks. At times the cliffs recede, and then in front there opens out a vast plateau shut in on the south by the central course of the Ili. There was now before us a district that has played a prominent part in the history of the East. It is the most accessible depression by which the great plateau of Central Asia may be reached from the Turkistan plains. Hence the Kuldja oasis has

served as a resting-place for the vast hordes whose migrations, conquests, and defeats have formed so important a chapter in the history of Asia.

On reaching the first station, Bash-chi, we had come down more than 2,000 feet, and found a poor picket station, where we were told that the horses were "in the field," or, better said, in the wilderness, and the time it took to catch them caused us at once to send forward an *estaphet* to announce our coming, and so, in future, prevent delay. By tea time we had reached Konur-Ulen, and met in the station an invalid telegraphist, who had just arrived to live a month in a Kirghese tent and undergo the *Kumiss* cure. He had brought with him of the fruits of the land, and gave us a melon, which added a relish to our meal, coming, as we did, from the fruitless steppe. Tea over, we watched a Kirghese woman putting up his tent, for the hire of which for a month he was to pay 12s. ; and whilst we were thus employed, the post-master, entering the name from my *podorojna* in his book, read the words, "The English Pastor, Henry Lansdell, *Doctor bogoslovie*"—literally, doctor of the Word of God or Divinity. The "bogoslovic" probably puzzled the post-master, for he was a Tatar ; but, thinking that "doctor" had something to do with medicine, he came to show his tongue, covered with sores, and affected, Mr. Sevier feared, with cancer. My companion applied some caustic, and promised to see him again on our return. The man bought a Kirghese New Testament, and we departed over at first a fair road, though afterwards it proved abominably stony. On arriving at Koibyn we found that we had sent forward an *estaphet* to some purpose, for Mr. Sevier, on springing out of the carriage and asking for horses, was told that he could not have them, for they were being kept for a general—the "general" proving to be none other than my humble self, whom the post-master seemed to anticipate to be of exalted rank, since such kind attention was

being shown me by the authorities. From Koibyn we proceeded up a mountain gorge that is described as pretty by both Schuyler and Ujfalvy, who speak of the varying yellow, red, and purple hues of the steep and scarped rocks, as also of bushes covered with blue, white, red, and yellow flowers; but we passed this place in the night, and by dawn came within sight of Vyselok Borokhudzir.

In passing the 60 miles from Altyn-Immel to Koibyn, we had met more than one party of nomads flitting to new pastures. A prominent individual among the first cavalcade was a stout old lady riding astride a fat ox. Other females of the party were all riding in the same fashion, some on camels, with children in front, and some on saddled oxen. We saw in the distance as we drove along Kirghese auls, with their flocks and herds, which form the chief means of subsistence, though some of the Kuldja nomads do, to a certain extent, cultivate the soil.

We had reached Borokhudzir, 3,900 feet above the sea, prettily situated on the right bank of the river of that name, on September 1st, and had I been a devotee of "Saint Partridge" there would have been no need for me to long for the turnip fields of Old England wherein to keep the festival, for the surrounding woods were full of game, including not only Partridges, but Pheasants, greyish Hares, and abundance of Deer.

Peasant colonists from the Tomsk province of Siberia have built a settlement near of about 50 whitewashed houses of unbaked bricks, where is a post and telegraph office, and a nursery garden, planted in 1869, for the purpose of showing the natives how to develop the horticultural capabilities of the country. General Kolpakovsky, we heard, took interest in this experiment, and on our return journey we inspected the nursery. It was watered by irrigation, and in the season furnished occupation for from 30 to 50 men. The vines were trained in bowers, of which there were many and long.

but the cheapness of fruit may be gathered from the fact that a Sart paid only £18 for all the season's grapes. The number and variety of young trees and shrubs was very considerable, and included pears, apples, walnuts, peaches, and sundry other fruit-trees, besides large numbers of karagatch. The hard timber of this last, when well seasoned, possesses enduring qualities that are highly esteemed. Some of it also was growing in the form of well-cut hedges. Other trees were the thorny acacia, and among poplars a silvery species with a light-green smooth bark. I noticed, too, raspberry canes, artichokes, cabbages, cauliflowers, cucumbers four spans long, and a plant resembling a large turnip with cabbage-leaves, the Kohl Rabi of our farms. The products of this nursery are thought much of by the natives, and are distributed as far as Kopal.

From Borokhudzir we drove out by the wide street, fringed with canals and willows, very early in the morning; and, having crossed the river that gives its name to the village, traversed a vastly improved region, where on either hand there met us tokens of culture, in the form of well-arranged canals, but all in ruins, and the land overgrown with weeds. The road entered the remains of a considerable forest of prickly shrubs, pines, willows, and karagatch trees, said to have extended in former times as a cultivated forest nearly all the way to Kuldja. Chinese settlements were scattered throughout, and the ruins of them are still visible, but the trees, no longer cared for or irrigated, are fast dying. Nine miles from Borokhudzir we crossed the River Usek, on the bank of which are situated the ruins of Jarkend.

The remnant of a people called Solons live near. They are not an old race in Sungaria, but are a section of the Manchu race living in North-Western Manchuria, and forming some of the most warlike of the banner-men. At Jarkend they live in widely scattered mud houses in winter, and in summer pitch their tents on

the river banks; but they are few in number, some having removed to the neighbourhood of Chuguchak, and others having become Christians, and settled at Sarkansk. The place, however, is likely to regain importance from the Taranchi and Dungan emigrants, who have settled there since my visit in order to be under Russian government, in preference to staying in Kuldja under the Chinese. In the Usek our carriage stuck fast for about an hour, till some Cossacks came to the rescue and got us out.

By breakfast time we reached Ak-Kend, where a comfortable Chinese house had been converted into a Russian post-station. Here we met a travelling Russian priest, to whom I sold some tracts and Scriptures. The station is in the midst of a once flourishing, but now ruined, Chinese town, the only semblance of commerce that we could discern being two or three stalls for the sale of melons and vegetables. We speedily purchased some of the former, and proceeded on our way, now meeting clumsy Chinese carts, and passing here and there a field under cultivation. On reaching the River Khorgos, which is the boundary line of the Russian and Chinese empires, we found encamped a number of Cossacks, who bought some of my books, and then proceeded to help us to cross the stream. In spring this is sometimes impossible for weeks. On the present occasion a mounted Cossack preceded us to find the shallow parts of the bed, whilst another rode by the side of the tarantass, with a rope attached, to keep us from toppling over. On emerging safely from the river, we passed ere long the walls of Tchimpantzi, once a flourishing industrial and commercial centre with 50,000 inhabitants, but where not a single house had been left standing. Formerly the town was surrounded with irrigated fields, but since they had been visited with the curse of civil war the land had reverted to a barren steppe.

Over this Steppe we drove for some miles, passing

the Taranchi village of Mazar, lying off to the left, whilst three miles further could be seen the Solon village of Dabir. On arriving at Alimptu there were no post-horses, though the chief strove to comfort us by saying that, had our estaphet only arrived earlier, he would have stopped the post in order that we might have the steeds. Whether this was perfectly genuine I know not, but there were abundance of Cossack horses in the stable; and when we asked the Cossacks whether they could not take us forward, they graciously consented, but asked for four times the normal fare! This they abated, Russian like, to a triple charge, which we paid rather than wait longer than sufficed for a meal. In the station yard was a stone lion with curly mane, similar to those placed by the Chinese at the doors of their temples, or of persons of high rank, the lion being usually represented in a sitting posture with the right paw on a globe. This post-house was kept by a brother and good-looking sister, who struck me as superior to the average of their class, and who were, we afterwards found, children of the post-master in easy circumstances at Chinchakhodzi, where we arrived the same afternoon.

All the morning, as we had driven along through ruined towns' and desolate fields, we enjoyed by contrast a strangely beautiful view of the distant mountains, their bases being hidden by mist, whilst their snowy peaks seemed to float on the bosom of the clouds. This was especially the case with those on the right, and those on the left at their summits were also sprinkled with snow. These mountains of the Ili valley contain numerous minerals, but it is doubtful whether any, except perhaps coal, are valuable.

Coal has been worked in the valley for more than half a century, though not used in other parts of Central Asia. Chinese labourers worked in companies of 8 on co-operative principles, or Kalmuks in gangs of 12, hired by Dungan or Taranchi capitalists. They

sought a spot, when possible, where they could sink a vertical shaft sometimes 300 feet deep, and at the same time advance thereto down an inclined one, the former serving to raise the coal, and the other as a means of communication. Up to the coming of the Russians the price of coal at the pit's mouth was three farthings per cwt., by reason of the cheapness of labour, materials, and food.

The station at Chinchakhodzi we found in the midst of an excellent garden, with numbers of standard peach trees, and a bower of vines with grapes beginning to colour. Here was another fair sister and daughter of Russia, whose mother, the post-mistress, told us that they whom we had seen at the previous station were her son and daughter, and she further informed her guests, with some satisfaction, that she had another son a post-master, and a third who held the appointment of Russian and Chinese interpreter to General Friede, Governor of Kuldja. But though the happy mother of five thriving sons and daughters, the good woman had a "skeleton in her cupboard," even in the Ili valley, for she had also a child idiotic, and, reading "Doctor" on my *podorojna*, she supposed there might be a physician passing by, and brought her boy of eight, saying that he had never spoken since he was three years old, that he had fits, was never still, and seemed like one possessed. Sevier, for some reason, could not dispense for her satisfactorily out of our medicine chest, but promised to bring on our return some iodide of potassium, and gave hope to the mother that her child might outgrow his malady.

Chinchakhodzi is inhabited by Dungans, and being a Mussulman town, escaped the general destruction at the time of the war. It is surrounded by a wall, and wears an aspect unmistakably Chinese, as did the maize and harvest fields we next passed through.

Our next station to Chinchakhodzi was Suidun. As we approached we saw the Cossacks exercising, and

coming nearer found the Chinese strengthening the walls of the town. About 10 miles distant were the ruins of what was the Chinese capital, variously called Ili, New Kuldja, and Manchu Kuldja, in which 75,000 people were butchered in one day. We did not go there, nor had we yet seen the last of the ruins by the roadside, an outline of the origin of which will, I think, better enable the reader to understand the heterogeneous elements of which the Ili population is now composed.

The history of the Ili valley dates back as far as the second century before the Christian era, when the Usuim were driven by the Huns to settle there from Mongolia. After the time of Jinghiz Khan, Sungaria, of which the Ili valley was a part, was possessed by several tribes, called Kalmuks, who formed a confederacy, and were termed *Oirats*. Their influence spread over all Mongolia, and in 1450 they conquered the Chinese, but subsequently their power declined. In the beginning of the seventeenth century internal dissensions began to lead to secessions of tribes, and in the following century the Sungarian throne was seized by a usurper, who recognized the suzerainty of China, and then repudiated it. This conduct was punished in 1756 by the Chinese massacre of 600,000 Kalmuks, so that Sungaria was completely depopulated.

China then proceeded to repeople the country by sending there her own convicts and vagabonds, by planting military colonies of Solons and Sibos from Manchuria and Dauria, by causing to migrate thither from the western provinces of Kan-Su and Shen-Si, Chinese Muhammadans called Dungans, and by importing from Kashgaria other Muhammadan settlers, who became known as Taranchis. Besides all these, in 1771 there began to return from the Volga region a number of the Torgout tribe of Kalmuks, who had migrated thus far before the destruction of their kinsmen, and who had been invited by the Chinese to come back to the haunts of their ancestors.

For the purpose of keeping order in the country, the city of Ili or Manchu Kuldja, south of Suidun, was built as a seat of government and settled by Manchus. In course of time the officials so oppressed the Mussulman inhabitants that in 1864 the Dungans rebelled and killed the Manchus and Chinese about Urumtsi to the number of 130,000. The wave of rebellion rolled on to Kuldja, where the Taranchis joined with the Dungans, and completely overturned and massacred the Chinese and Manchus. Then the Dungans and Taranchis fell out with each other, met



A TORGOUT KALMUK.

in battle in April, 1867, and the Dungans, who had everywhere murdered, robbed, and pillaged, were badly beaten, and so the Taranchis became rulers of the country. Meanwhile the Russians had been quietly looking on during the insurrection, refusing help to the Chinese authorities, and declining to enter into relations with usurpers. Numbers of refugees fled to Russian territory, and were kindly received and located as colonists; but when the Russian border was crossed by marauding Kirghese from the Kuldja territory, and when, moreover, it looked possible that

Yakub Beg, Governor of Kashgar, fighting successfully with the Dungans, might proceed also to Kuldja, the Russians stepped in and seized it first, and promised



P'AI FANG, OR CHINESE MEMORIAL ARCH, AT SUIDUN.

the Court of Peking that, so soon as the Chinese Emperor could restore and maintain order, and pay the expenses incurred by the Russians, the province should

be given back to the Celestials. The fulfilment of this promise had been claimed the year before my visit, so that I found things in a transitional state, and the strengthening of the wall of Suidun, referred to above, was in anticipation of the Chinese return to power in the following year.

We did not stay at Suidun, though it was late in the evening, but posted on past the ruined Baiandai, formerly a town of nearly 150,000 inhabitants, and at midnight arrived at Kuldja. We had now travelled from Omsk, a distance of 1,200 miles, in a fortnight, having our clothes off to sleep only the two nights at Semipolatsk. There are no hotels at Kuldja, and as it was too late to present letters of introduction, I was glad enough to throw myself down on the bench in the dirty post-house to sleep, and then go forth in the morning to be struck by the extraordinary ethnological varieties of the inhabitants.

The Ili valley may be regarded as a half-way house between the Turanian races of Central Asia and the Mongol races of China. Here meet the settled Mussulman Taranchi and Dungan, with the Buddhist Sibo, Manchu, and Chinese; as well as the nomad Muhammadan Kirghese, and the Lamaist Kalmuk.

The Taranchis call themselves Sarts, but to the Chinese they became known by their present name from their occupation as agriculturists or millet sowers, from *taran*, meaning millet, or, according to some, "a ploughed field." Their dress consists of a full shirt, drawers of leather or cotton, and a khalat, with a *shub* added in winter. Except the mullahs, the men do not wear turbans, but fur caps; whilst women and girls adorn their heads with stiff, low, gaudy, cylindrical hats, having conical tops. We saw ordinary patterns displayed in large numbers up to 20s. each, but wives of sultans have their caps adorned with jewels, sometimes to the value of upwards of £100. A pair of ladies' boots I bought are about 10 inches high, of red

leather, gorgeously embroidered, and fitting close, but without a second sole or heel. They do well for house wear, but for the street a golosh is worn over them. Now and then one sees among the women a pleasant face, but they are all browned, being accustomed from childhood to work in the fields ; a striking contrast to their Tashkend sisters, who remain shut up in the house. The males shave their heads. One of our curious sights in the bazaar was a baby boy squalling under this operation.

In their houses the Kuldja people are said to have



A TARANCHI.

introduced improved surroundings and furniture, such as bedsteads and tables, at which they sit to eat, using stools and sometimes even chairs of simple workmanship. This, however, was not the case in the house of a former Taranchi bek, occupied by his five-times married widow, wherein lived Colonel Mayevsky, whom we visited in Kuldja. In this case a large proportion of the room was taken up with a raised divan, covered with rugs, and the dining-table was less than a foot high.

The Dungans, or Tungans, are Sunni Muhammadans, and wear a skull cap, shaving the head like the

Taranchis; but in language, dress, and almost every other respect they resemble the Chinese.

The Solons and Sibos, as already stated, were brought to the Ili valley as military colonists from Eastern Manchuria. I remember hearing, if not seeing, something of a Tunguse tribe called Solons



SIBO MILITARY COLONISTS.

when on the Amur in 1879, and as Dr. Schuyler says the Sibos speak a Tunguse dialect similar to the Manchu, I presume they come from about that locality. The colonists were divided into 14 banners or *sumuls*, afterwards increased to 16, the Solons being settled on the right bank of the Ili, and the Sibos on the left.

The Sibos number 18,000 souls, the sexes, numerically, being about equal. I had been recommended to visit a Sibo sumul as one of the sights of Kuldja, and we accordingly did so. Of the eight Sibo sumuls we drove to the second, and arrived at a rectangular walled town, with a chamber over the gate. In this room were some idols, brought thither from a destroyed temple. We drove through a long, and fairly wide, but dirty street, to a building that corresponded to a town hall or house of public business, the walls of which were written over with stories in Manchu. We were next



A SIBO WOMAN.

taken to a "fanza," or house, as I supposed, of a dignitary. The principal room was spacious and clean, but the furniture and ornamentation were chiefly confined to the western side, where were a hieroglyphical-looking representation of a tiger, and the paraphernalia of a Buddhist altar, on which were placed the *penates* or household gods. I should have liked to have purchased some of their *burkhans*, or idols, but they would not sell them: in fact, I think the proprietor was not there. I had taken some Scriptures, in Chinese and Mongol, but they could read neither one nor the other. They

said, however, that the men of the sixth sumul could read, and that books should be sent to them through the Russian Consul. We then went into other houses looking for curiosities, when my eye fell upon a man's belt with a clasp, fastening with a hook and eye cut in jade. There was also suspended from the belt, of the same material, a carved lotus, or sacred flower of the Buddhists. I bought the whole, and it is now in the British Museum. We inquired, likewise, if any in the town were sick, and were taken to a miserable hovel little better than a shed, where was an old man, somewhat of an idiot, with fever, but not of an eruptive character, and opposite to him a young man. Mr. Sevier carefully examined him, sounding his swollen and dropsical stomach. His ribs were dilated, the liver pushed up, heart out of place, and arms wasted, whilst his pulse was beating fast, and he was suffering from bronchitis. We had not the necessary instruments for tapping him, so that directions only could be given that he should be brought into Kuldja. The Sibos are said to be excellent gardeners, and when we repaired again to the town house to drink tea, they not only crowded round to see us eat and to partake of what we offered, but they brought us melons, after which we returned to Kuldja.

There remains one more tribe to be noticed in the present chapter, who are, in some respects, the most interesting in the Ili valley, because they are the least known. The Russians have long had the Turanian nomads under their rule, but not so in an equal degree the Kalmuks. I met with some of them in Kuldja, from whom it was easy to see that they represent the Mongol type in comparative purity, reminding me of the Buriats, another Mongol tribe, I saw in 1879. They are anything but good-looking. It should be added that they are good-tempered and generous, but exceedingly indolent. They are credulous, and dearly love anecdotes and stories. Artificially produced gaiety,

however, is followed by deep melancholy. Usually timid, they become very angry if irritated, and though not remarkable for severe morals, they excel the morally corrupt Chinese, than whom they are more generous, frank, and hospitable. They use no flour food unless it be gruel; and their brick tea they boil with milk, fat, salt, flour, and millet. I remember being treated to a cup of this mixture in a Mongol dwelling in Siberia, and my "accident done for the purpose" in upsetting the cup and declining with thanks to have it refilled.



A KALMUK BEAUTY.

For administrative purposes before the Russian rule, and now again I suppose under the Chinese, the Kalmuks are divided into squadrons (sumuns, or sumuls), each of 200 tents. They constitute the Chinese irregular cavalry. Each sumul is under the direction of a cleric called a *gelun*, and a laic called a *zang*. The *gelun* has the right to promote the lower lamas of his squadron to the rank of *getsul*, representing a third clerical grade.

The lamas are teachers, medical sorcerers, and

priests. Hence their services are called into requisition : at a birth to read prayers over the mother, and name the child ; later to instruct the boy, to marry him when grown up, to treat him when sick with prayers and drugs, and after death to decide whether the corpse shall be buried, exposed on the Steppe,—to be eaten, I presume, by dogs as at Urga,—or burned.

Family life among the Kalmuks possesses greater freedom than among the Solons. A Kalmuk girl is a shepherdess. She is married early, without much attention to her predilections, even without her consent, but she is at liberty to leave her husband and return to her relations. Whether she likes a suitor is known by her leaving the tent as soon as the marriage negotiations commence, or the reverse, by her staying during the whole conference. The parents, however, seldom regard her taste, and the aspirant, with their consent, watches for an opportunity of seizing the girl and carrying her off by force, the parents considering their duty towards their daughter fulfilled if only the man carry her off without their seeing it.

I have thus described certain tribes of the Ili valley, my remarks upon their government applying rather to the Chinese than the Russians ; and having now introduced to the reader the inhabitants of the valley, I shall be the better understood, I think, in detailing my experience during our stay in Kuldja.

CHAPTER VIII.

OUR STAY IN KULDJA.

Hospitality at the Russian Consulate.—Visit to Taranchis and Sibos.—Crossing the Ili with Cossack escort.—Roman Catholics in Kuldja.—The Russian Church.—A request from Roman Catholics for religious service.—Distribution of Scriptures. Steadfastness of Chinese Christians.—Visit to Buddhist temple.—Dungan and Taranchi mosques.—Visits to Chinese Police-master, and Commissariat officer.—Sale of Scriptures.—Taranchi, Chinese, and Sart bazaars.—Character of trade, prices, and coins.—Native restaurants.—Industrial buildings.—Visit to a Kalmuk tent.—Exploration of Kalmuk camping-grounds.—Colonel Prejevalsky's journey to Lob Nor.—Russian and English explorers of the Ili valley.

WE had arrived at Kuldja on Saturday morning, September 2nd, to find that most of the persons to whom I had introductions were away. The Governor, General Friede, was busy on the frontier, the line of which was then being settled; the Commander of the Chinese forces, to whom we had a letter from the Chinese Legation in London, was not in Kuldja, nor was the Chinese Governor-General, who lived, it appeared, in Suidun, which we had passed, so that we should have to see him on our way back. The next on our list was Mr. Paderin, the Russian Consul, to whose house accordingly we drove. Here, again, we were disappointed, for the Consul was also at the frontier; but on presenting my letter, his secretary saw at once that it was written by a friend, and begged us to stay at the Consulate. The building is pleasantly situated in a garden and shrubbery,

and its spacious rooms were furnished with such taste as, together with English books lying about, made one long to converse with the owner. What advance modern conveniences had made in this out-of-the-way part of the world was visible in the drawing-room, where there was a telephone communicating with a distant part of the town. The secretary's quarters were in a villa in another part of the grounds, so that we were to be lodged in the great house alone, save for the caretaker, and the secretary was to take his meals with us.

One of the first things we asked to be allowed to do was to visit the Sibö sumul, or encampment, I have referred to ; and finding that it was seven miles out of the town, I rather foolishly declined to go on horseback, and begged that we might drive in our carriage. Horses were found us, and a Russo-Chinese interpreter, and off we started at the dashing pace with which a Russian coachman thinks it proper to begin and end a drive, however he may lag in the middle. Old, or Taranchi, Kuldja was founded about a century ago, and is a rectangular town with clay walls, 30 feet high, sufficiently thick for two carriages to be driven abreast on the top, and measuring 4 miles in circumference ; the work, it is said, of 2,000 Kalmuks, driven to the task by the Taranchis. Two large streets crossing each other divide the town into quarters, which are subdivided by smaller streets and alleys. We made our way through the Taranchi bazaar, along the street of which runs a water-course from one of the two rivulets, Pensin-Bulak and Pilechi-Su, that water the town.

The Taranchi bazaar, in the citadel, has shops somewhat more roomy than those of Central Asia generally, and the street is not covered from rain or sun. It is paved with small stones, and the shops are kept by stolid Mussulmans. Here we bought our first ripe grapes and nectarines. Apricots ripen at Kuldja at

the beginning of July, and we were, therefore, too late for them, but of late peaches, that ripen early in August, we came in for the last, flat in form, about an inch and a half in diameter and half an inch in thickness. They tasted fairly well, but there was little flesh on the stone. Most of the Kuldja fruits, including pomegranates, apples, pears, and mulberries, besides those I have mentioned, are small, since the trees, through neglect, may be said to be almost wild.

As we drove from the bazaar towards the Ili (*Ili* means a river), we passed through the Taranchi gardens and fields, to find a swiftly-running stream, 700 feet wide, just the width of the Thames at low water at London Bridge; and when I saw the clumsy ferry into which our heavy tarantass had to be lifted, it was easy to see why the secretary recommended our going on horseback. On account of the velocity of the current, the process of crossing is slow, especially when it is windy. Usually there are three ferry boats, owned by a Russian merchant, and at the time we crossed there were large numbers of cattle waiting to do the same. They were accordingly tied by the head to the ferry, and made to swim after it, the barge being filled with vehicles and passengers. Having landed safely on the opposite side, we drove across a low, flat country, almost without roads, sometimes through ditches, and over crazy bridges, that kept us in doubt whether or not we should be let through into the stream below; but having at last reached the sumul, we inspected it as I have described in the previous chapter. The children thronged around us full of curiosity, but people seemed pleased to see us, only that our interpreter did not speak their dialect particularly well; and as our ideas passed successively through English, Russian, and Chinese, not to add Sibo, it may be supposed that we conversed with difficulty. Just as we had finished our tea, four mounted Cossacks came to the place, saying that the Commandant having heard of our

intended visit to the encampment, though he did not apprehend our being harmed, yet thought it better to send us a guard, and they had arrived at the Ili just after we had crossed, and so failed to catch us up, but that they were now ready to escort us back when we pleased. We therefore started speedily, for evening was drawing on, and we did not reach the Ili till dusk. The embarkation from this bank was more difficult than it had been from the other, and there was much ado to get the Cossack horses on board, for they had to walk in the shallow water and then jump over the side of the barge. One little horse, at a word from his rider, sprang over the gunwale with the agility of a cat, although the others had to scramble up in a fashion that I should think only Cossack horses would do. It was dark before we reached the Consulate, but we had spent an enjoyable day, and were quite ready to turn into bed, for this had not been vouchsafed to us more than twice for a fortnight.

The morrow being Sunday, I had thought whether there was any clerical work I could do. The Mussulmans and Buddhists had their mullahs, and the Russians had their priest. I heard of no Protestants, but I had both heard and read of a small colony of Chinese Roman Catholics at Kuldja, amongst whom Christianity was introduced by French missionaries who came from Peking, some say a hundred years ago, in accordance with which Mr. Ujfalvy states that he found among them Latin and French books of the last century and beginning of the present. Mr. Ashton Dilke in 1873 stated that before the insurrection these Christians were nearly 400 in number, but that 300 of them, including their priest, Father Thomas, were then massacred. The remainder of these Christians, according to Dr. Schuyler, were among the first to welcome the advent of the Russians. The Jews, however, have no dealings with the Samaritans, nor have the Greek Catholics with the Roman. Consequently

there was a little flock surrounded by Russians, Mussulmans, Buddhists, and Pagans, who spoke enthusiastically to Mr. Dilke of their murdered priest, and compared Christianity with their former religion, much to the disadvantage of the latter, still holding fast to the only form of Christianity they had ever known, yet doing so without a shepherd, and notwithstanding that they had been unvisited by one of their missionaries, or, so far as I could learn, had any communication with head-quarters, for seventeen years. The case seemed to me both interesting and pitiable, and I wondered if there were anything I could do. We had no spoken language in common. Mr. Dilke spoke of their accent in pronouncing Latin as Italian, but said that some could translate it. Dr. Schuyler thought the pronunciation "at least singular," and some years later Mr. Delmar Morgan had found the pronunciation "wholly unintelligible to a European ear." Mr. Ujfalvy mentions, indeed, that some of them could read Latin and French, but then, he adds, "without understanding it," so that it seemed clear I could do nothing in the way of preaching. I mentioned the matter to our host on Saturday, and begged him to make inquiries of the Roman community if there was anything I could do for them. The secretary, however, did not see his way very clearly in the matter, and when we returned in the evening he had another plan to propose—namely, that we should accompany him to the Russian church in the morning, and visit the Romans in the afternoon, and to this, though disappointed, I agreed.

There is but one Russian church in Kuldja, and that some distance from the Consulate, on the outskirts of the town. Two Cossacks came to ride behind the Consul's carriage, in which the secretary drove to service, and when we reached the church I saw, for the first time, I think, a Russian church that departed from the usual style of architecture, and that was built to look on the exterior a little like a Chinese

pagoda. Inside there was a long nave with aisles and wooden pillars, and the building approached more nearly in form to the interior of an English church than anything I have seen in Russia. The choristers were soldiers, as also those attending on the priest, and the full congregation appeared to comprise the *élite* of the Kuldja world. After the service I gave some Russian tracts to the Protoiarea (or Dean) Bieloarski. As we returned, the military band was playing the national anthem.

At lunch the secretary had invited to meet us a Polish doctor, who inquired if I would baptize his children. I was somewhat surprised to receive such a request from a Roman Catholic, and, that there might be no misapprehension on his part, asked whether he understood that, if I did so, according to the formularies of the Church of England, the children would be regarded as Protestants; to which he replied it were better even so than for the children to grow up heathens. However, he said he would first consult with his wife, and also let me know whether his family, and the Chinese, would like me to administer to them the Holy Communion according to the English order; for my opportunities of doing anything for them seemed shut up to this, and knowing the exaggerated, and, as I think, unscriptural prominence which Romanists give to the Lord's Supper, I thought that after such long deprivation thereof they might like to join in the celebration of this sacrament, even though not administered according to their own form. The doctor returned at length to say that General von Kaufmann, when in Kuldja, had promised to send a Roman priest, and he thought, therefore, it might be better to wait for the baptisms, but that they would like me to give them the service, for which, accordingly, I prepared.

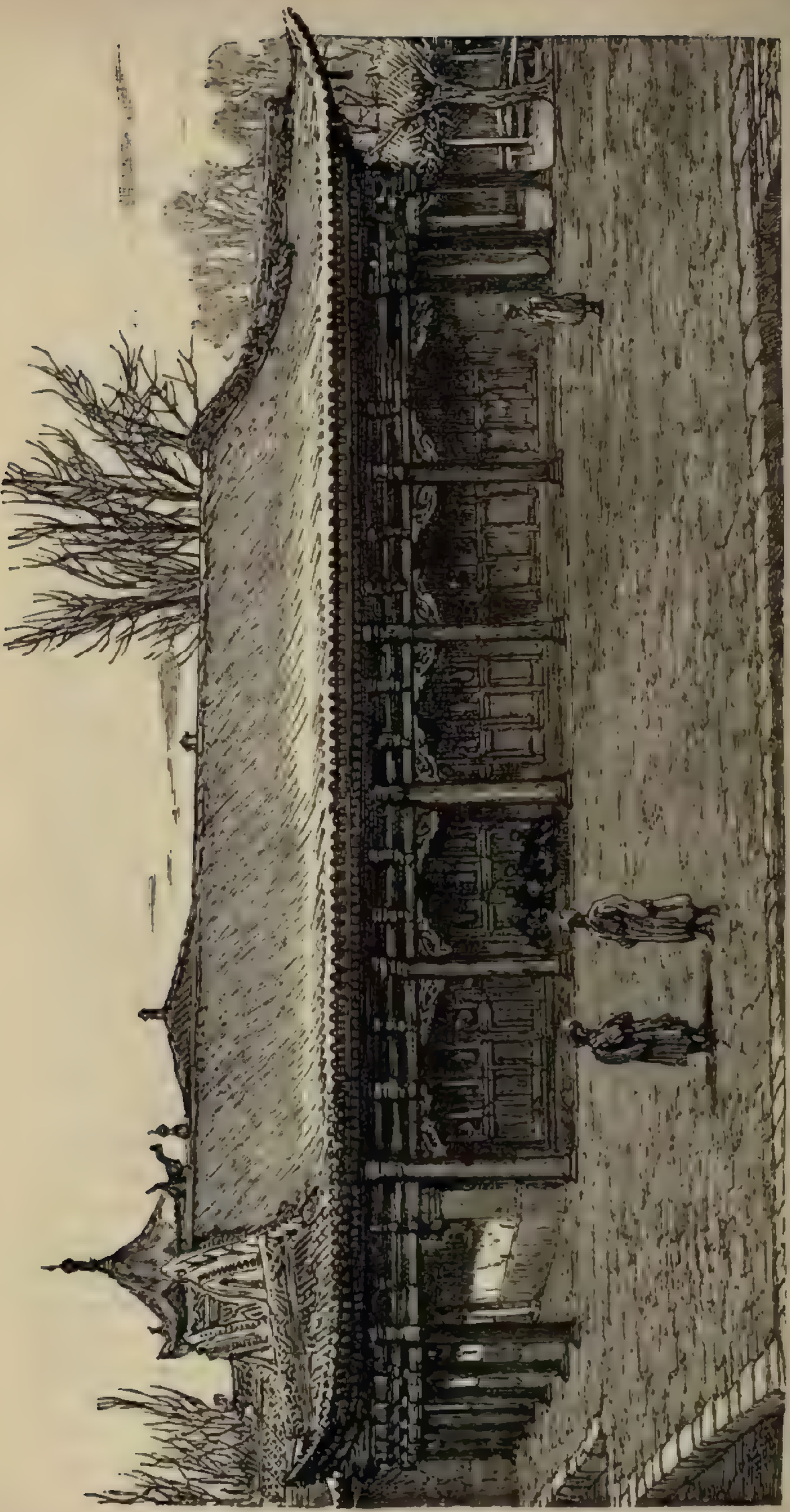
We found the chapel in the outskirts of the town, at the bottom of a narrow court, where I think most

of the Chinese Christians, 65 in number, were living. They received us with a smile of welcome, appeared desirous for the service, and conducted us to a room measuring about 30 feet by 20, where was an altar with pictures, candlesticks, and other appurtenances, and a box at the side containing some of the minor vestments, and a New Testament in Chinese. Here I met the Polish family, whereupon difficulties arose, in that, as Romanists, they would not partake of the cup, and next they remembered that as they were not fasting, but had dined, they could not receive the elements at all. They wished, however, to be present whilst I officiated, and so remained whilst I and my fellow-churchman communicated. The Chinese perceived when Mr. Sevier knelt or stood, and so to some extent followed the service, and I thought perhaps they would have communicated when they saw him do so; but they did not seem to comprehend what was expected of them, and I proceeded till, coming to the blessing, I lifted my hand as does the priest in the Greek and Roman churches. The meaning of this they perceived at once, and knelt, thus ending one of the most curious passages in my ecclesiastical experience.

Could I have seen the end from the beginning, I am not sure that I should have acted as I did, but I meant it for the best, and the people seemed grateful. They said that one of their number occasionally read prayers, and the Russian priest sometimes gave them a "benediction," but I think I learned that this last was abnormal, and not given with very good grace, so that they had no other public service. I did not gather they were in the habit of meeting for the study of the New Testament, and I wondered how the book had come there, for though Messrs. Dilke, Morgan, Schuyler, and Kostenko, all speak of Latin books, and Ujfalvy adds also French, they say nothing of any in Chinese.

I had brought with me some Chinese, Mongolian, and other Scriptures, and was willing to have given them several; but though they accepted one or two copies, they did not appear to want more. They numbered 13 families, of whom 15 persons, they said, could read. I asked if they would like to have a missionary sent to them, to which they replied that they had not discussed the question. This exchange of ideas, or, perhaps I ought to say, attempt at conversation, was attended with difficulty. The best interpreters on the Consul's staff were with him and the Governor, I suppose, on the frontier, and our interpreter was decidedly feeble, but as a finale the Chinese brought forth tea, grapes, melons, peaches, and nectarines, and in partaking of them we were joined by some Russian officers who had heard of my conducting the service.

Kostenko says that as a rule "these Kuldja Catholics are very lax as to the essentials of their religion. They wear crosses round their necks, and read prayers in the Latin language, and they made a request (that is, of the Russians) that they might be permitted to display these emblems on the outside of their dress." I may add, however, that a very intelligent Russian Protestant in the region told me that among their own people the character of the Chinese Christians stands high, that they do not smoke opium, and that their word can be relied on. The persistence of this handful of Chinese in the tenets of their adopted religion, under such unfavourable circumstances, reminded me of my crossing the Pacific in 1879 with an American clergyman who had laboured as a missionary among both Chinese and Japanese, and who regarded work among the former as decidedly the more hopeful. The Japanese he allowed were more readily influenced, but, like children, they sometimes drop the toy that has quickly pleased them, whereas, though John Chinaman takes a longer time to be convinced, he



THE RANCHI TAJUMMA MOSQUE IN KULDJA.

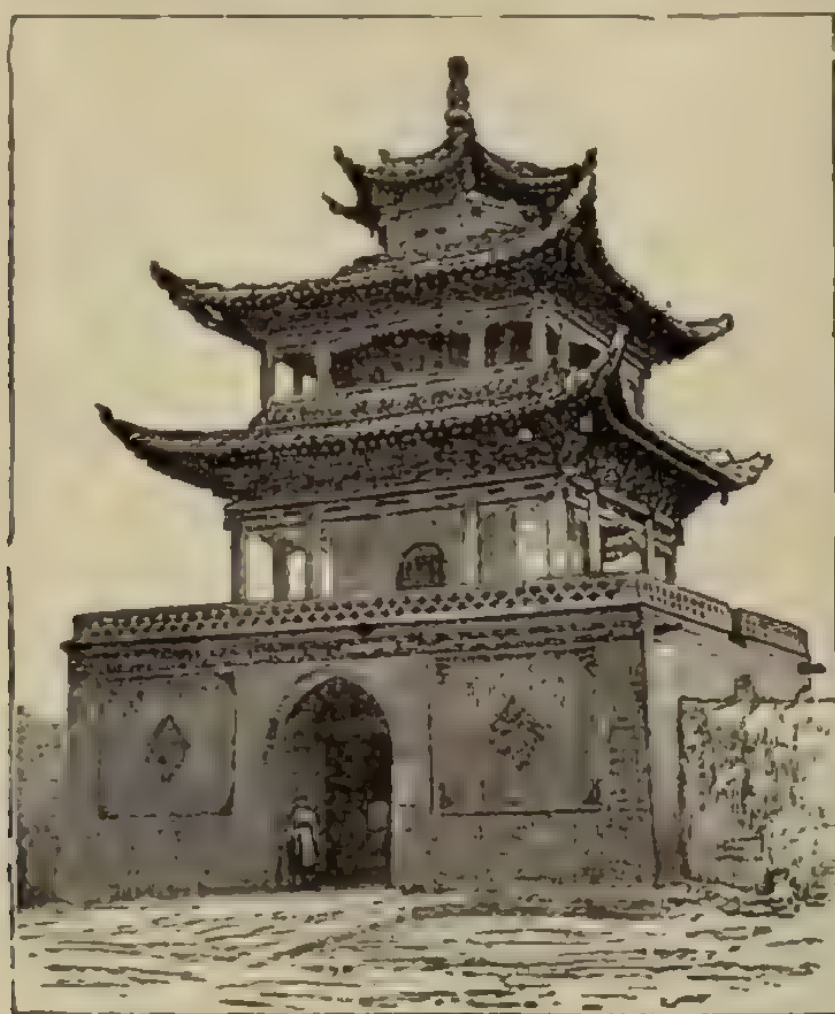
is, when won, more easily held. I have since heard that three Roman missionaries have arrived in Kuldja.

After bidding the Romanists farewell the Russian officers took us to the Buddhist pagoda. There is only one in Kuldja, and that a poor one. On leaving the street we passed through an antechamber into a courtyard, where children assemble for instruction in the tenets of their creed, each pupil holding a book, and all reading together as in Mussulman schools. Crossing the courtyard we entered the joss-house and saw the idols. Against the wall was a large dais, with various eatables arranged thereon, and lamps and vessels for incense. Representations of dragons are displayed, as well as suspended banners and bells. I did not see any adoration performed, but Kostenko says that a dirty and ragged individual, with a bundle of lighted joss-sticks in his hands, advances and recedes from the altar with endless bowings and striking of the bells. On important occasions, instead of verbal prayers, papers with petitions written thereon are burnt, in the belief that the petitions thus dealt with will ascend to God more quickly. I did not observe any prayer-wheel such as I saw at a Buddhist monastery near Kiakhta in 1879; but the temple at Kuldja was exceedingly dingy, dark, and dirty. Here, however, I disposed of some Mongol and Chinese Scriptures, the priest, as I supposed him to be, or attendant, thankfully accepting a Bible, and two other men, apparently poor, each purchasing a copy for 4s.

It is strange that the Hindus who penetrate throughout Turkistan as money-lenders do not appear to have reached Kuldja, so that we had no Hindu temple to visit; but I may mention two other religious buildings we saw the following day. One is the Dungan mosque near the Chinese bazaar, with a high and handsome minaret, and the other the Taranchi *Jumma* (or Friday) mosque in the citadel. The latter is the larger and

older building, restored and ornamented under the last Taranchi sultan, Abil Ogu. Both these principal mosques are built in Chinese style, with roofs turned up at the corners, and are the most remarkable buildings in the town.

In the vestibule of the Buddhist temple lived the Chinese police-master, upon whom, in company with the Russian officers, we called. He gave us pale yellow tea, with oval leaves, about $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. long and $\frac{5}{8}$ in.



MINARET OF THE TARANCHI MOSQUE AT KULDJA.

wide, and what looked like blossoms of the plant, in the cups. It was no doubt thought very choice, but for me had little flavour. Looking about the room, I observed a guitar-like instrument with three strings, the drum being covered with snake-skin, such as I remembered seeing in 1879 in Eastern Manchuria. There was also in the police-master's room a flute, about two feet long, with ten holes. Before leaving I offered our host a copy of the Bible in his native

tongue, which he accepted ; and we were then taken to call upon another Chinese official, an officer of commissariat who welcomed us with a smile to his rather dirty house, and, when asked to accept a Bible, said he had heard of it as a book, the reading of which would do a man good. I showed him my Chinese passport, and he said it was well that I had it, as without it I might be liable to interference. Looking round his room, I perceived an important-looking package wrapped up in yellow silk. I learned it was his seal of office from his Emperor. He had also a flat box, two inches square, with a compass and lid, which, when opened, distended a string intended to throw a shadow on the box, and thereby act as a pocket sundial. The officer was dressed in silk, and his manner was unusually gay for a Chinaman. My companions at once recognized his condition, and told me that if he took only a little wine he very soon became intoxicated, but that the cause of his present hilarity was opium smoking. On his divan stood an opium lamp lighted, so that our visit had disturbed him before he had reached oblivion. One object we had in calling upon him was to ask him to inform the Chinese Governor-General at Suidun that I hoped to have the honour of calling upon him on my return journey in two or three days, and when this was arranged we returned to the Consulate to dinner.

We had now visited some of the religious buildings of the town, and I had distributed my books and tracts as opportunity served. Mr. Sevier took some to the Russian hospital, whither I did not accompany him, and I heard nothing of any prison. This was the first town we had entered where Muhammadans were so numerous, and I had not yet forgotten the warning given me in Omsk as to the danger of offering them the Scriptures. Nor did I know how such a course would be regarded by the Chinese. When going to the bazaars next day, however, I took in the chaise

a large bag filled with Scriptures, and whilst looking here and there for curios to purchase, I presently offered for sale a copy of the Gospels in Chinese for 5 kopecks. It was bought and immediately examined, with the result that others came to buy, and those to whom I had sold returned to purchase more. I then offered the New Testament for 40 kopecks, and the Bible for 60 kopecks, and was amused to see them comparing the size of the Bible with that of the Gospels, and so reckoning what ought to be the price of the latter from the proportionate thickness of the former. I was now besieged by purchasers, who jumped at my offers. One man wished to buy wholesale, but fearing that he would re-sell them at exorbitant prices, I preferred to dispose of them myself, and soon came to the end of my Chinese stock. But the Mussulmans showed equal eagerness to get Tatar books, and my remaining Kirghese New Testaments were fast disappearing—one Tatar on horseback not only paying the sum demanded, but in his eagerness literally snatching the book from my hand. Some of the Chinese subsequently came to the Consulate to purchase more, and I presented some Mongol Scriptures to the interpreters for themselves and for a school of which they told me. A few other copies of Mongolian Scriptures I left with a note for Mr. Paderin to distribute, and thus, with the many I sold and others I gave, it came to pass that I emptied in Kuldja my three cases of books, and had the satisfaction of being the first salesman there of the Word of God. This I counted a greater honour than to have marched into the city at the head of an army, whether it were the half-wild horsemen of Jinghis Khan, or the Cossacks of the Russian Tsar. The latter have now left the province, but my books remain as seed that is sown: and I am content to wait for an answer to the question, What shall the harvest be?

On Monday morning, September 4th, we started

early with the Consul's servant and an interpreter to the Taranchi, Chinese, and Sart bazaars. The first was noticeable for its abundance of vegetables and fruit, large melons at 5 farthings each, and the best apples—good-looking but tasteless pippins—at the same price, whilst flat peaches sold for $4\frac{1}{2}d.$ a dozen. These prices for local produce were not exceptional, for eggs cost from $5d.$ to $8d.$ a hundred, and fowls from $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ to $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ each. Before the advent of the Russians, chicken cost only a halfpenny each. Manufactured goods from Europe, however, were dear, and even Russian “family” tea cost from 2s. to 6s. per lb. I secured some Taranchi rings and representative jewellery, and we then went to the Chinese bazaar, where among the curious things exposed for sale were ready-made coffins “painted and all complete” for £4. Throughout this emporium there is ceaseless movement, bustle, and noise, for the vendors of wares scream out to the purchasers, and amongst the inevitables are crowds of children, some half naked, and others wholly so, chasing one another about and increasing the general hubbub of the restless scene. Among the crowds of men there is a fair proportion of Chinese women, in national costume, who, owing to their compressed feet, sway from side to side as if on stilts.

Trade in a Chinese bazaar is of three sorts: first, a regular business carried on in shops where the more expensive articles are sold, such as chintz, tea, sugar, iron, etc.; next, a casual trade done at a stall or table in cheaper things, such as common soap, mirrors, wooden combs, inferior tobacco, needles, handfuls of Russian sweetmeats: all being packed each night. Among these goods we observed snuff for nose and mouth—that is, for sniffing and chewing. It was done up in small paper packets at a halfpenny each. Then, lastly, there is the hawking trade, carried on from the familiar basket, or it may be from the hand, selling eggs, birds, and fruit. I could see very few Chinese

curios that were worth buying. Up to the time of the Russian occupation, idols could be bought, and costly objects of silk and porcelain; but their purchase by the Russians has sent up the price, and now they are both rare and dear. I secured some specimens of Chinese coinage in the form of large copper money, with Manchu inscriptions on one side and Chinese on the other.



"SHOP STREET" IN WINTER IN KULDJA.

The Sart bazaar, called in Russian *Bazaar ulitza*, or "shop street," we found inhabited chiefly, I think, by Dungans. Here it was amusing to see how every piece of old iron and tin was saved as precious and exposed for sale, even to empty sardine and blacking boxes. They positively gave me $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ as the price for an empty lobster tin! In this bazaar I purchased a

pair of silver hair-pins, such as are worn among the Dungans by married women only. They are now in the British Museum.

A feature noticeable to a European in the Kuldja bazaars is the native restaurants, where those who can face the ordeal may be satiated for 6*d.* The variety of dishes in the restaurants is great. They are highly spiced with saffron, but it is not whetting to the appetite to have to pass through the kitchen and see the cook preparing the viands, or swinging the dough, as we saw one man doing, in pendulous fashion, for making long twisted loaves. Chinese bread, though white, is unleavened, badly baked, and tasteless. Again, it is not pleasant to remember that the Chinese eat all kinds of meat, dogs included, so that it is wise to give charge beforehand as to what shall be cooked. Chinese butchers sell mutton and beef without bones. The bones form a separate trade, and are bought by the poor, who make of them soup, and add morsels of meat.

The foregoing description of the bazaars of Kuldja does not give a lofty idea of the importance of its trade, which, in fact, is very small, though there are 650 shops in the town.

We were taken from the bazaar through an oil-shop to one of the industries of Kuldja, which are at as low an ebb as the general trade. In this oil factory pressure was brought to bear upon the linseed and mustard seed softened by heat, by means of a long trunk of timber employed in a most clumsy fashion. The oil is used for eating, lubrication, and lamps, whilst the cake, out of which the oil has been pressed, is given as food to oxen.

On leaving the bazaars, we were anxious, if possible, to get a peep at the Kalmuks. On our way to the suburbs, we saw a Chinaman in the street, surrounded by a crowd. He had a drum and iron clappers, and was entertaining his auditory by telling stories. On

the previous day we had seen a street acrobat, one of whose standing or walking feats was to raise one foot to his breast and strike the sole with his palm; a second man meanwhile beating a gong. On reaching the Kalmuk tent we found the owner absent, though his wife was at home with some small, but by no means bashful, children. We looked round for ethnological objects. There was a leather kumiss bottle, but this the woman, in the absence of her lord and master, would not sell. She had in her ears, however, silver rings, with stones; and as she confided to us that she



A KALMUK WOMAN, WITH NATIVE EARRING.

was 57 years old, and had received them on her marriage, I perceived these could be of no Russian manufacture, but representative of Kalmuk art half a century ago. I therefore pressed her to sell me one, which she did, and it is now in the ethnological department of the British Museum.

Comparatively little is known in detail of the Kalmuk camping-grounds at the eastern end of the Ili valley. The most renowned of Russian travellers who have passed that way out of the valley into Mongolia is Colonel Prejevalsky. In 1876 he started from Kuldja,

made his way along the Ili, and its upper arm, the Kungess, until he reached its tributary, the Tsagma. This brought him by the Narat pass to the Yuldus plateau, described by the Kalmuks as "an admirable, cool, and productive country, fit for gentlemen and cattle to inhabit." From this place Prejevalsky pushed his way to Lob Nor, but not before he had shot some fine specimens of the Central Asian species of mountain sheep.

I saw at the Kuldja consulate, as also at Tashkend,



OVIS POLII, OR THIAN-SHAN SHEEP.

specimens of the skull and horns of this remarkable animal, which is bigger than a donkey.

The animal's horn is more than four times the length of the skull. All round the neck there is a pure white mane, and the light greyish brown of the sides shades off into white towards the belly, the legs being brown. It inhabits high hilly plains, and runs with great speed. The Cossacks say that the wild sheep, in jumping from one rock down to another, alight on their horns—a statement that Dr. Severtsoff thought improbable, though, since the head and horns of

one he shot weighed upwards of 70 lbs., he seems to think it just possible such a weight might cause the animal to lose its balance.

Mr. Serge Alpheraky is another Russian traveller who has penetrated the Kalmuk camping-grounds, and in 1879 he followed Colonel Prejevalsky's track as far as the Yuldus plateau, with the object of collecting butterflies and moths.

A third Russian explorer who has done good service to botanical science in the Ili valley, and the valley of the Baratol on the north, is Dr. Regel, who travelled to Turfan in 1879. Of the two Englishmen who preceded me in this region, Mr. Ashton Dilke in 1873 went down into the Baratol valley from Sairam Nor to Ebi Nor, and then returning to Kuldja he ascended to the plain of Musart, saw Khan Tengri, and went thence to Issik-Kul. Mr. Delmar Morgan visited Lake Sairam, and also went as far as the River Kush; but for my own part I did not advance beyond the capital, having seen which, and distributed my books therein, I prepared for turning back.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM KULDJA TO ALTYN-IMMEL.

A visit to Colonel Mayevsky.—Native preference for Russian rule, and why.—Kuldja restored to China.—Emigration of natives into Russian territory.—Our departure from Kuldja.—Destruction of cattle by beasts of prey.—Suidun.—Three classes of Chinese.—Interview with Chinese Governor-General.—Refreshments followed by questions.—Opium-smoking.—A Chinese artist.—Governor-General's present.—A messenger awaiting us at Borokhudzir.

WE were invited, on our last evening in Kuldja, to visit Colonel Mayevsky, who was living some distance beyond the market-place in a house that formerly belonged to a Taranchi bek. This title is hereditary, and the young boy who had succeeded thereto was introduced to us. The house, I suppose, might be regarded as a specimen of a rich native's dwelling. Almost all the native houses are made of beaten clay, have thatched roofs, and are, externally, low and ugly. The courtyards are heaped up with impurities, and even the abodes of the well-to-do display an absence of ventilation and light; but we had no reason to complain on this last score, for it was dark before we reached the colonel's dwelling. We looked over the house, and perceived an attempt at ornamentation of the walls, the room of our host being adorned with carpets and rugs. We received, moreover, a hearty welcome from the colonel, who had great regard for the English, speaking of them as rivals in Asia, though not as foes. He allowed that our infantry were better

than theirs, but thought the Russian cavalry better than the English. He spoke, too, regretfully of having to cede the province to the Chinese, for it made so excellent a frontier, and alluded to the delicate position in which the Russians were placed with regard to the natives of Kuldja, who preferred the Tsar's rule to that of their old masters the Chinese.

When it was decided that Kuldja should be given back to the Chinese, the inhabitants were told that they might remain or cross the border into Russian territory. When I was there, less than a year before the evacuation, numbers of the inhabitants were already gone ; and to show that their hatred of the Chinese had not subsided, I may add that, after taking everything out of their houses that was of value, they set fire to the remainder, so that their former masters, on taking possession, should find as little as possible to appropriate. One report, probably exaggerated, said that nine-tenths of the people were leaving. Meanwhile the Chinese were doing their best to prevent this emigration by promising greater liberty, and freedom from taxes for ten years. Such persuasion they did not attempt openly before the Russians, but we heard that when possible they had recourse to coercion, way-laying and maltreating the emigrants. I suspect it was something of this kind that hindered our starting at midnight, as I intended on the evening we saw Colonel Mayevsky. At his house we met the assistant to the Uyezdi nachalnik, and he kindly arranged for us about post-horses, but the authorities sent to say that night travel was not safe, and advised us to wait until morning. Only the night before, they said, some travellers had been waylaid and an ox killed, but I did not learn whether it was a case of highway robbery or of Chinese intimidation. Nothing was said of danger on the post-road from beasts of prey, though M. Alpheraky, further up the valley, lost two horses by tigers, which kept uncomfortably near the



THE MARKETPLACE WITH DUNGAN MOSQUE IN KULDJA

party, and some idea of the number of beasts of prey in the country may be gathered from the fact that in the southern portion of the province in 1877 the wolves killed 7 camels, 657 horses, 249 horned cattle, and nearly 8,000 sheep.

We drove out of Kuldja at half-past five on Tuesday morning, and thus had the opportunity of seeing by day certain parts of the country through which we had come by night. We passed through fields and gardens, wherein are grown, besides the crops I have mentioned, peas and Indian corn, also pumpkins, carrots, turnips, radishes, beet, cabbage and garlic, but not potatoes, unless it be for Russian consumption.

After a drive of some hours over a bad road, we arrived before noon at the residence of the Chinese Governor-General, Tsin-Tsiang Tsiun (the last word being his name, and the former two his title), at Suidun, which was more distinctly Chinese than Kuldja, since that was under the Russian authorities, but here was established the authority of the Tsin-Tsiang. In speaking of the "Chinese," it should be remembered that this term in the Ili valley includes three classes of people, differing alike in language, abilities, and character.

All classes suffered in the rebellion. The few who survived lived more especially in Suidun, which was the only large town in the province that outlived the events of 1863-66; but others had come since the promise of the retrocession of Kuldja, and more were expected in such numbers that I heard of a Russian officer purchasing house property in Kuldja with a view to selling it at a premium. From a letter I have received, however, I gather that things have again become prosperous and thoroughly Chinese, but that the Russian houses are standing empty.

I had looked forward, with some degree of curious interest, to the presentation of my credentials from

the Legation in London to the Chinese Governor at Suidun. The Russian post-house is in the suburbs, and not wishing to take up our heavy tarantass, we had driven into the town in another vehicle, that we could dismiss, and on reaching the principal street, I sent my card to the Governor-General. We were asked to stay where we were, and having done so for some minutes, the messenger came back to say that his Excellency was changing his robes, and had summoned his officers of state. We then went down a narrow street, and were shown into an entrance chamber with many attendants, the walls being hung with English and American muskets, rusty, old, and apparently worthless. Dr. Schuyler said the walls of Suidun were wide enough at the top to serve for a carriage road, and, as we approached the town, labourers were increasing their thickness; but with such arms within, the Russians might well laugh, as one officer did, saying that a company of their Cossacks would set the Chinese flying.

Whilst waiting, I changed my dress for the occasion, and, when all was ready, crossed a yard to enter a square court. At the opposite side stood the great man, whilst on the right and left were men drawn up in martial array. The effect was meant, no doubt, to be imposing, and it certainly was curious. My host saluted me by lifting his hands in a "lullaby-baby" fashion, and then took us within, and invited us to be seated on two sides of a table, about 3 feet square, whilst he occupied a third. Opposite the Tsin-Tsiang, on a table, was the Government seal of office, wrapped in yellow material, together with a scroll containing his credentials. His officers, twelve in number, with various orders and feathers, stood behind him, perfectly silent, one of them fanning presumptuous flies from the grand man's head. On the table were plates with slices of apple, grapes, wafers, and some honeyed cakes, made apparently of seed from which oil had been

pressed, and such as we saw, but were not delighted with, at the Kuldja oil factory. Our host then proceeded gravely to help us with his fingers, placing the eatables a few at a time on our plates, first wafers, then grapes, apples, and cakes. At the same time was brought tea of a strong jasmine flavour, called red, but pale and highly aromatic.

Tea was put into each cup, water poured thereon, and covered with an inverted saucer, a little smaller than the rim of the cup, and, consequently, keeping in the steam. This was well enough, but now came a feat of manipulation, for the cup had no handle, but had to be held with the fingers, whilst the thumb was left free to tilt the saucer into the beverage, in such a way as in drinking to hold back the floating leaves from entering the mouth. We succeeded pretty well, and I expressed admiration for his tea, which remark bore fruit, as will presently be seen.

He soon opened fire upon me by asking, in a stereotyped manner, who I was, and whence and how I had come. I at once showed him my map, and put to the test his Chinese geography. He asked whether Turkey was north or south of England, and how far, respectively, from London were Paris, Berlin, and Constantinople. He inquired how long I had been travelling, and whether I had left the Marquis Tseng in London, to which I replied that he had sent me my letter from Paris. I invited him to ask further questions, whereupon he inquired of what our daily food in England consisted. When my host had finished his queries, I began by asking if it were likely we should have the pleasure of seeing him in London. That depended, he said, entirely upon the Chinese Government, as to whether they chose to send him; but he did not expect it. I assured him that we should have a great many strange things to show him, and inquired how soon he thought they would have railways in China. He thought "not at all"; for that in one

instance where they had laid down a line, they had, after trial, taken it up again!

This I thought was "progress" with a vengeance, and I expressed my surprise. Meanwhile, after drinking tea, his Excellency began to smoke a pipe, drawing the cloud through water placed at the bottom of the bowl, which he did not hold continually in his hand, but took one long, long whiff, and then the bowl was emptied of tobacco, and taken away by an attendant until called for again. This suggested my asking him if the smoking of opium were general among the Chinese. He replied that many practised it, and when I expressed a fear that it was working evil in China, he replied that it was against the law, the penalty for breaking which was to have one's tongue cut. I fancy, however, this was said with a wink, for in Kuldja (under the Russians, it is true) I saw men smoking opium publicly, and the materials for opium-smoking appeared easily obtainable.

I then offered him a Chinese Bible and a Mongolian and a Buriat New Testament, which he accepted, after inquiring what they were. From the manner, however, in which he looked at them, I fancy he was a Manchu. After the gushing reception my Petersburg letters had secured me at the hands of the Russian governors, I had thought, perhaps, this good man would be at the pains to ask if he could do anything for me, or show me anything, especially as he said he had received official notice from London of my coming. But he seemed not to dream of such a thing, nor to get his official temperature above freezing point, so that our conversation became somewhat dull, especially as what I said in English had to be twice translated, into Russian and Chinese or Manchu, and *vice versâ*. It gave time, however, for meditation between the questions, and presently finding that he had nothing to propose for my pleasure or instruction, I asked whether I might go and see the

men building the fortress, and also visit the bazaar. The first of these trifling requests he refused, saying that there were workmen about, and disagreements might arise. He asked me, therefore, not to go, but said he would send someone with me to the bazaar.

We then rose after this formal reception, and were dismissed with the same ceremony as when we came in, and taken again to the antechamber. Here I offered some Scriptures to the attendants, but they said they did not dare take them without permission.

One of the first things that attracted my attention in the bazaar was a street painter, whose pencil explained to me the want of perspective, apparent in a certain class of Chinese paintings; for the man simply dipped the tip of his finger in Indian ink, and rubbed it round and round on the tablet till he made his picture, and only then touched it up with a brush. After seeing this I marvelled, not as I had hitherto done, at the clumsiness of the production, but that in such a manner, and so rapidly, the artist should have been able to produce anything so good. I noticed on the stalls packets of English needles, and found a few curiosities to buy; and then, thinking that I should perhaps get on better alone in distributing my few remaining Scriptures, I intimated to our cicerone that I need not trouble him further. But he said the Governor had told him not to leave me, so that he was probably a spy. I managed, however, to give away a few Chinese and Mongolian books, and then prepared to return to the post-house.

To this end we chartered a native conveyance, the most uncomfortable of its kind, without exception, I ever entered—a two-wheeled cart, without springs or seat, and with an awning, against which one's head was constantly in danger of striking. It served us, however, to the post-station, and as we were driving out of the town a Chinese officer and interpreter came dashing up to our carriage, one of them carrying two

small canisters of tea, and saying that since I had so appreciated the Governor's tea, he sent me two canisters for a present. His Excellency had apparently thawed a little since our visit, or if he had suspected me as a spy, he seemed to have by this time changed his mind. Anyhow I thanked him for his gift, but was at first inclined to look thereon as "a white elephant," for I hardly relished the trouble of carrying two canisters of tea a distance home of 5,000 miles. When I reached Vierny, however, I was told that this yellow



A DUNCAN PUBLIC CONVEYANCE.

tea was of so choice a kind that it is reserved in China for the Emperor and great personages; that now and then Chinese generals sold it to Russian officers, and that its value was about 50s. per lb., whereupon I was reconciled to bringing it to England, but only to give to my friends in small quantities as a curiosity, for my poor taste is not sufficiently educated *à la Chinoise* to appreciate its super-excellence.

We reached Chinchakhodzi by night, and found the guest room of the post-station occupied by a doctor. We were recommended not to proceed in the dark,

as the road was bad, but to wait for the rising of the moon, which I did, our company being soon increased by an officer, his wife, wet-nurse and a baby; so that, rather than attempt going to sleep, I sat up reading and writing, and soon after midnight we sped forward. Early in the morning we crossed the two or three streams of the Khorgos, and breakfasted at Ak-Kent. The following station was Jar-Kend, which has now become colonized by Dungans and Taranchis who have left the Kuldja province to be under the Russians, rather than remain there to be subject to the Chinese.

We came next to Borokhudzir. We had succeeded well about horses thus far, but, to make matters still better, we found awaiting us here, on the frontier of the uyezd, the secretary of the Uyezdi nachalnik, who, through General Kolpakovsky's kindness, had actually come all the way from Kopal to accompany us for the purpose of seeing that we were not delayed through lack of horses. An instance of greater official kindness than this I had never met. The secretary took us over the nursery garden in the place, and we then started forward, our cicerone preceding us a little so as to get to the next station first, and have fresh horses in readiness. The same evening, at Konor-Ulen, we came a second time to the station where was the sick telegraphist, whose kindness to us we returned by leaving him some fruit. Mr. Sevier attended again to the tongue of the Tatar, who asked this time what were the books we had sold him, for he could not understand them. After this we reached the steep incline of the pass, up which we had six horses to drag us, before descending to the station beyond.

CHAPTER X.

FROM ALTYN-IMMEL TO VIERNY.

Route over Chulak hills.—The Ili bridge.—Trans-Ili Ala-Tau mountains.—Appearance of town and houses.—Diversity of population; races and classes.—Introduction to M. von Ghern.—Poor hotel.—Mercantile acquaintances and sale of Scriptures.—Scriptures for prisons and hospitals.—Visit to Archbishop.—Need of Scriptures and tracts in the vernacular.

IT was early on the morning of the 7th September when from Kuldja we arrived at Altyn-Immel. The bulk of my books had greatly shrunk, for everywhere the post-masters and others purchased them readily. Accordingly, our boxes repacked, we started for Vierny. Altyn-Immel station is 4,000 feet high, and in four stages we were to descend 2,700 feet to the Ili river. Our road lay over the round-backed spurs of the Chulak hills, and after the second station, Karachekinsk, across immense plains, dotted here and there with Kirghese yourts, and herds. At Chingildinsk, the next station, was a spring of water, roofed over in the post-house. This I was taken to see as something remarkable,—a veritable treasure, I suppose, in such a region.

Here we drank tea, and posted on to Ilisk, defended by a small fort, where a ferry took us across the Ili, here about 700 feet wide. Future travellers will be able to cross by a bridge. It was to be opened in the spring of 1884, as Major Gourdet wrote me, a wood

and iron one built on the American Howe system, 850 feet long, at a cost of about £20,000. M. Gourdet had been sent to Europe to order the ironwork of the structure when I met him at Moscow. At this river our official companion reached the frontier of his uyezd, and having now conducted us rapidly, and shown us every attention possible, he bade us adieu. Meanwhile, we pushed on to Kuntenta, after passing which I learned the use of sending on the wagonette ahead. I had insisted on this after our former mishap; and at about two o'clock on the morning of the 8th we overtook our vehicle, out in the cold, come to an utter standstill, one of the wheels not having gone a little wrong, but having fallen entirely to pieces. We could now only trot forward in the tarantass to the next station, Kara-su, where the good-natured post-master lent us a wheel to recover the broken-down vehicle, and allowed us to take it on loan to our destination. When I offered this man books, he inquired whether he was *obliged* to purchase them. He did so, however, upon being assured that he was a perfectly free agent.

We then set off on our last stage across plains, from which we could see Vierny a long, long way distant among trees, and behind it, rising in majestic grandeur, the snowy peaks of the Trans-Ili or southern Ala-Tau. This range consists of two long, high, and parallel chains. The northern, of which we had a good distant view as we drove along the plains, presents an uninterrupted mountain mass, rising to an average height of 8,600 feet, and in its central portion to the limits of perpetual snow, but falling somewhat lower at either extremity, and, finally, in its eastern section, broken by the gorge of the River Chilik, and afterwards by the Charin. Tal-Cheku, the highest peak, has an elevation about equal to that of Mont Blanc, and its snows are visible for more than thirty miles.

We had heard in the north of the delights of Vierny, and, as we drove along the flat and painfully uniform

steppe, were looking forward to our arrival with pleasure. We reached the town before midday on the 8th September, and drove to Alikén's Hotel, where, the best room being engaged, and the remaining one utterly dirty and uninviting, we made off to another inn to inquire for quarters. Here we heard of two French gentlemen, said to be travelling for pleasure and sport, who had gone to Issik-Kul, and for whom the room was retained. We were told we might have it on condition of turning out when the Frenchmen returned; but as the chamber was in painful proximity to a billiard-room, from the noise of which it seemed



APPROACHING VIERNY.

likely disturbances might come, we returned to the previous hotel, and took the room with the promise that we should very shortly move upstairs when the occupant of the best room departed. The establishment had, however, one good feature about it—a Russian bath, of which we availed ourselves immediately, and then proceeded to see the town and make some calls.

We hired a droshky at the very moderate tariff of $7\frac{1}{2}d.$ an hour, and found that the town straggles over a wide area. There is the station Almatinka, forming the old part of the town, the settlement of Almatinka,

the Tatar suburb, and new Vierny, the last built since 1870, and to which we drove through straight, wide, and fairly level streets, bordered thickly on either side of the footway with double rows of poplars. The older portions of the town, regularly laid out, are entirely built of red fir wood, whilst in the new town are several houses of brick, including the Governor's and the Archbishop's palaces, and the adjacent *gymnase*, all of them designed, if I mistake not, by M. Gourdet, a



A STREET IN VIERNY.

French architect in the Russian service, to whom I have alluded. The Governor's house, with its offices and gardens, occupies a whole "quartal," or square. Outside the town there is a public garden, with greenhouses and flowers, also a pavilion for music and dancing, supper and cards.

The great diversity of the population is more striking than its numbers, and gives the streets a curious appearance, as one sees Russian women driving in carts full of melons, side by side with Kalmuks riding

on bullocks, or Kirghese on camels, bringing raspberries, gathered from the surrounding hills, to sell, for as much sometimes as realizes 6s. a day. I think I never met in a public square so many types of countenance. Cossacks predominated—the original settlers; then followed Little Russians, recent arrivals, who occupy a suburb in the south of the city, and among the colonists are also a few Chuvashi, Mordvins, Cheremises, and other peoples from the Volga. In addition to these were Tatars; Sarts from various towns in Turkistan and Kashgaria; Kirghese who have adopted a half-settled mode of life; Kalmuks, Dungans, and Taranchis, who came from Kuldja after the Chinese devastation of 1864. They do all the menial work, and some of them have been baptized. Lastly, there are Jews and Chinese, come for purposes of trade.

By the kindness of M. Gourdet I had been furnished at Moscow with an introduction to M. Vladimir von Ghern, the Procurator Fiscal, or examining magistrate at Vierny, upon whom we called on our first afternoon, and received a hearty welcome. This gentleman had been in Central Asia for some years, and had taken an intelligent interest in the people and country. He was a collector of Chinese and other curiosities, and of objects of natural history. He had some Chinese arrows of state, jade ornaments, and Chinese spectacles of stone, rubies, and other gems. He not only gave me a great deal of information, but also presented me with some skins and skeletons for the British Museum, also with an old Bokhariot camel whip, made of maral skin, woven over with brass wire; a Kara-Kirghese knife of native manufacture, and some Kirghese threads, called *taramiss*, made from the tendons of horses' legs. When, therefore, we had dined at his house, and learnt such particulars as we wished to know concerning the town, we returned to our hotel feeling somewhat more at home.

But the so-called "hotel" was a sorry place, its staff consisting of two men—one to sell spirits at the bar, and the other, who had been a soldier, to act as waiter, chambermaid, and factotum. The latter was of Jewish nationality, dirty and unkempt, called hither and thither by day, and more than once (what is very unusual in a Jew) muddled by liquor at night. On one of these half-drunken occasions he confided to us that the hotel had been built and was owned by a man who came to the place a private soldier, and now possessed I know not how many thousands of roubles, and "the reason he gets on so well," said he, "is because he doesn't gamble and drink"; and then he stammered out, "No more do I, and that's why he keeps me." Fortunately for us we had found a firm friend in M. von Ghern, who insisted upon our coming every day to his house to dinner, so that the samovar with hot water, and such things as we could purchase in the town, were nearly all we had to trouble our waiter for.

Early the next morning we received a visit from M. Ivan Ivlampivitch Pargatchevsky, a tea merchant, to whom I had an introduction from, I think, his former employer at Kiakhta. He seemed honoured by the introduction, and nothing could exceed the old man's eagerness to do for us all he possibly could. He brought me white bread, sent to an outlying village to procure good fresh butter, not easily obtainable in Vierny, and so entered into my scheme for the distribution of the Scriptures, that he begged me to send him five pounds' worth to circulate as widely as possible by sale at catalogue prices! He seemed pleased to meet one who had been to Kiakhta, and told me he was the first to propose the bringing of tea up the Amur, and across the Trans-Baikal steppe, instead of over the Mongolian desert. Another mercantile friend whose acquaintance we made was a German named Berg, whose cook had the reputation of being the best maker of bread in the town, so that the master

appeared before me in the character of a baker, though his lawful calling was that of a watchmaker. I was also informed that, being a Lutheran, he acted as deputy for the pastor in baptizing Protestant children.

We received a visit likewise from the police-master, who came to take us to see the prison, and afterwards to the cattle-market, which presented a lively appearance with men for the most part mounted, and talking I know not how many tongues.

As we approached Vierny we overtook many cart-loads of melons making their way to the town, and the number of melons we saw in the market was surprising. M. von. Ghern gave us a water-melon for dessert as big as the largest of English pumpkins, and he said that water-melons had been brought to the town weighing as much as 36 lbs. They have also at Vierny a smooth melon raised from Kuldja seed. Melons and water-melons are sold for the moderate price of 6s. a hundred, and can be kept for use up to Christmas. In the market we also bought grapes, and, still better, small but luscious nectarines, the latter for a halfpenny each, of which, as I sat over my writing at night, I ate so many as to alarm Mr. Sevier, whose medical instincts led him to fear for the consequences. All went well, however, and I held with him a medical consultation as to whether no ill-effects having followed from my indulgence was a good or bad sign ; and upon his assuring me that it evidenced a good digestion, I never stinted myself from that time onward from Central Asian fruit, and I am thankful to say was not once inconvenienced thereby.

Vierny is the centre of administration for the chief of the Cossacks and the police, besides being the residence of the Governor, who was away on official business during our stay. We called upon the Vice-Governor, M. Aristoff, who had read of my visits to the prisons of Siberia, and of my distribution of the Scriptures. The latter met with his hearty approval.

and he readily undertook to carry out my wishes in the five hospitals and five prisons of the province, for which purpose I sent him, by the police-master, 80 Scriptures and 100 other publications on the following day.

On Sunday we went to see Alexander, Archbishop of Turkistan and Tashkend. Opposite his door was a large Buddhist bell. When ushered into his Grace's reception-room I was fairly taken aback at the furniture, the number of curiosities and pictures, and the taste with which they were arranged. On the wall were Italian paintings; on the tables photographic albums of Rome, and curios from the catacombs and Prague; from China and Japan coins and talismans, as well as antiquities from Lake Issik-Kul. But what was more remarkable for a Russian ecclesiastic, there was a good library, and in it Bibles in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin—such a thing, I was told, as was possessed by no other priest in Turkistan. I had been before into the houses of Russian priests and bishops, but had never seen anything to equal this, and the Archbishop's story soon showed that it was due to foreign influence. His grace was a widower, who, after losing his wife, had become a monk, and passed through the academy. He had served as priest in Petersburg, had been a member of the Russian Mission at Peking, and also chaplain at Rome. With great glee he showed me some rare and curious books against Popes and Romanists found on the bookstalls of Rome, and which he regarded as spoils from the Philistine's camp. He spoke Italian fluently, and Chinese, but French, unfortunately for me, he had almost forgotten. He had a splendid collection of Central Asian photographs, and gave me some in exchange for others I was to send from England. These have since served me in good stead for engravings. It must not be imagined, however, that the Archbishop counted his income by thousands. I was told it did

not probably exceed £300 a year, and very many of the things I saw were presents, and the curios had been picked up in odd places at comparatively little cost. I should gladly have had much conversation with him, especially about the Russian Church, concerning which, from having seen other religious communities abroad, the Archbishop could form a better estimate than many of his *confrères*. I referred to the sad lack of preaching therein, whereupon he mentioned the harassing regulation that a priest before preaching a sermon must write and send it for approval to the censor, but he thought it likely, nevertheless, that preaching would revive in the Russian Church; saying that, as a matter of fact, many priests do now expound the Gospel for the day in the churches or in private houses. The old gentleman gladly showed us his treasures, and, had his strength and our time permitted, he would have entertained us longer, but we had to go to M. von Ghern's, close by, for our last dinner at his hospitable board.

My host was delighted to see the Kirghese New Testaments I had brought. He had some doubt, however, as to whether the translation was in the pure dialect of the people, though he did not think they would be unable to read it. I afterwards had a similar opinion given me by some of the Kirghese themselves, who said it contained several Tatar words.*

* I have subsequently learned its history to be this:—A version of the Scriptures, in plain Turkish, was published in Oxford in 1666, having been translated by Mr. Seaman, chaplain at Constantinople. This, however, was found to be too Constantinopolitan to be readily understood by the Tatars, who speak a purer Turkish without the circumlocution and foreign words adopted by the Turks of the capital. Seaman's version served, nevertheless, for a basis on which Mr. Bruntin, a Scottish missionary, prepared another version, in Turkish, restored to its pristine simplicity, for the Tatar tribes about the Caspian, and that was called, from the place where it was printed, the Karass version. So well acquainted was Mr. Bruntin with the language, and so pure and idiomatic was his style, that the Tatars regarded him as a renegade Turk. He died whilst the work was going through the press, but the edition was finished by his fellow-missionary, Mr. Frazer, in 1813. Five years later Mr. Frazer accommodated this

I could hear of no books whatever in pure Kirghese, and was told that a translation of Scriptures and the simplest of tracts for the Kara-Kirghese, estimated at upwards of 250,000, and the Kazaks would be highly appreciated ; as also for the Taranchis and Kashgarians, estimated at from perhaps 2,000,000 to 3,000,000, and of whom 4,000 or 5,000 come yearly as summer workmen into Semirechia. On my return I brought the matter before the Committees of the Religious Tract and the British and Foreign Bible Societies ; with what result has yet to appear.

Thus we had a refreshing rest at Vierny, and made some pleasant acquaintances, and when we left next morning I felt we should have cause to look back thereon as one of the green spots of our journey.

Karass version to the idioms and spelling of the Kirghese at Orenburg, the Gospel of Matthew being printed in 1818, and the whole of the New Testament in 1820, at Astrakhan, at the expense of the Russian Bible Society. It was this version, I believe, that I took with me as "Kirghese."

CHAPTER XI.

THE KIRGHESSE.

Resemblance of Kirghese nomads to Hebrew patriarchs.—Primeval character of the steppe.—Existence there of Biblical customs: whence came they?—Origin of Kara-Kirghese and Kirghese Kazaks: their diseases and character.—Kirghese habitations and tombs.—Dresses and ornaments.—Settled agricultural Kirghese.—Semi-Nomads.—Nomad Kirghese: their cattle, sheep, and goats.—Changing pasture, when and how conducted.—Stationary pastoral life.—Polygamy.—Kirghese betrothal.—The *Kalim* and presents, with rules pertaining.—Marriage ceremonies.—The bride's departure.—Kirghese marriage, a civil contract.—Dissolvable by separation or divorce, with laws concerning each.—Marriage with deceased brother's widow.—Laws concerning inheritance.—Illustrations of Hebrew pastoral life, and suggested source of Kirghese customs.

IT was with keen interest that I approached the tents of the Kirghese. As a Biblical student it had occurred to me how intensely interesting it would be to witness people living in a stage of civilization nearly resembling that of the Hebrew patriarchs, and I had supposed that this might best be accomplished by a journey up the Euphrates valley to Palestine. But I came to the conclusion, after seeing the Kirghese, that in them I had met with more truthful representatives of the manner of life of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, than if I had gone to the soil those patriarchs trod, because the elements of change have been less busily at work in the Kirghese steppe than in the Holy Land. Since Abraham's day the Land of Promise has seen the

rise and fall of the Jewish nationality. Later, the country has been conquered by Assyrians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans; and now the features of its Eastern life are suggested rather than portrayed by Arab sheikhs, who have long had contact with Turks and Franks.

But the Kirghese steppe has not been thus influenced by foreign conquerors to anything like a similar extent, for it lay off the area of the great battle-fields of Central Asia. And it should be remembered that a quarter of a century has not passed since the Russians could safely travel to all parts of the steppe, in some portions of which still they number less than one European to a hundred natives. There must be masses of these children of the desert who as yet have scarcely seen, much less lived in, a town; who neither speak nor have heard any language but their own, and who know only their own patriarchal usages and laws; so that, when this is borne in mind, it will seem probable that in the Kirghese may be witnessed an earlier stage of pastoral life than could be seen in the countries made familiar to us by the Scriptures. I have been the more engrossed with this thought because I discovered still existing in the steppe certain laws and customs that obtained not only in the times of Moses, but in those of the great-grandchildren of Abraham. The question arises, then, Whence came these laws into the steppe? If from the Koran, matters will be simplified; but even then there will remain a further question whether they are due to Muhammadan influence only, or whether they may not antedate the Koran (which has many resemblances, we know, to the Pentateuch), and come from the Abrahamic times of which Moses wrote—in which case we are sent back to a very remote past that is full of both Scriptural and ethnographical interest.

The Kirghese belong to the Turco-Tatar race, and

their principal divisions coincide with the surface of their territory, the Kara-Kirghese, or Kirghese proper, as they are sometimes called, inhabiting the mountains, and the Kazaks the plains. The number of the Kirghese can be estimated only by calculating 5 persons to each tent that pays taxes. I compute them at two and a quarter millions.

The origin of the Kara-Kirghese, Levshine says, is lost in the night of fable and of Turkish history; whilst concerning the origin of the Kazaks, sometimes called Kirghese-Kazaks, he gives no less than seven traditions, the first of which makes them emigrants from the Crimea, and the third affirms that their ancestors lived on the banks of the Euphrates.

If this latter were true, it would help to throw light upon Kirghese customs now obtaining, which were known to the great-grandchildren of Abraham. From the Euphrates this tradition says they were driven by the Turks on to the land of the wild Kirghese, to whose khan they submitted.

The Kirghese are tolerably strong, but clumsy, with slouching gait on foot, though bold riders. They are as a rule, fairly healthy, but among other maladies they suffer from scurf and skin diseases at the roots of the hair. Some suppose this proceeds from want of cleanliness; but M. Ujfalvy, and Khanikoff before him, attributed it rather to the constant wearing of a sheep-skin hat. I cannot say who is right, but I have a vivid recollection how, whilst wearing a native hat by night for warmth, when crossing the desert, my head became singularly heated and the skin irritated.

In character the Kirghese are unsophisticated, honourable, and brave, until they see the chance of gain; and then they are prone to thieving. Having food and raiment, they are perfectly content, preferring idleness to work. They are hospitable, and love to hear news, which they are great hands at retailing. The most trivial event gives a Kirghese a favourable

opportunity for riding off to the nearest collection of tents to relate his intelligence, to be in possession of which is a passport to gain the bearer admission any where to eat and tattle.

Some of the Kirghese poor in winter live in holes or underground huts, where children and cattle sleep and play together. Others, as a protection against the cold, endeavour to winter in sheltered places, in hollows, or among reeds or sand-dunes. On the first approach of warmer weather they remove to their ordinary habitation, which is a conical felt tent, called



A KIRGHESE.

a *kibitka* or *yourt*, that is easily taken apart or put together, and so light that a camel can carry it. Accordingly the nomads wander from place to place, carrying their abodes with them, and it is not until a rich man dies that his body has for its habitation a building, with some little pretence to architecture.

Levshine, however, mentions cemeteries where several persons are buried, and Réclus, quoting Nöschel, says that the Kirghese prefer to bury their dead on hilltops, and leave on the graves various eatables, and money. I saw many tombs on high places, but none

with such things as these left thereon, or on Muham-madan graves further south. I well remember, however, finding sweetmeats, and coins, in Eastern Siberia, on the graves of the Buriats, and the thought therefore suggests itself whether these offerings left on certain Kirghese graves are not, as they are with the Buriats, remnants of Shamanism, the old religion of the Mongols.

The Kirghese dress like the other natives of Central Asia. Nowadays, those who are at all well off have shirts, but the poor continue to wear next the skin their *chapan*, as they call it, or *khalat*, closely resembling a loose dressing-gown, over which as many other like garments are worn as the weather requires. Their trousers, both for men and women, are of buff or reddish leather, immensely wide and baggy, called *chimbar*. A Kirghese, however, is proudest of his girdle, often covered with silver, and from which hang bags, and wallets for money, powder, bullets, knife, and tinder box, the whole apparatus being called *kalta*.

The women dress much like the men, except that the under-garment resembles a close-fitting shirt. Above this they wear a *khalat*. The poor women swathe their heads with calico, forming a combination of turban and bib ; but the rich wear a square head-dress of huge proportions, enveloped in a white veil trimmed with gold.* The hair is plaited in small braids, and adorned with coins and tinkling ornaments. To these may or may not be added necklaces, bracelets, etc.; but there is one thing rarely omitted from female costume, which is a silver amulet, hanging from the

* The Kirghese women, I believe, are never veiled closely, as with the Sarts, but they sometimes so far cover the face as almost to screen it from observation. This half-and-half plan seems to have prevailed amongst the women mentioned early in the Old Testament. Thus Abraham said to Sarah, "Behold now I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon" (Gen. xii. 11), from which we may suppose that Sarah did not usually wear a veil; nor Rebekah, when at the well she met Abraham's servant, though when about to meet her future husband "she took a veil and covered herself" (Gen. xxiv. 16, 65).

neck in the form of a kernel, cylinder, or triangle, and containing Muhammadan writing, or perhaps prayers, given by the husband at the time of marriage.

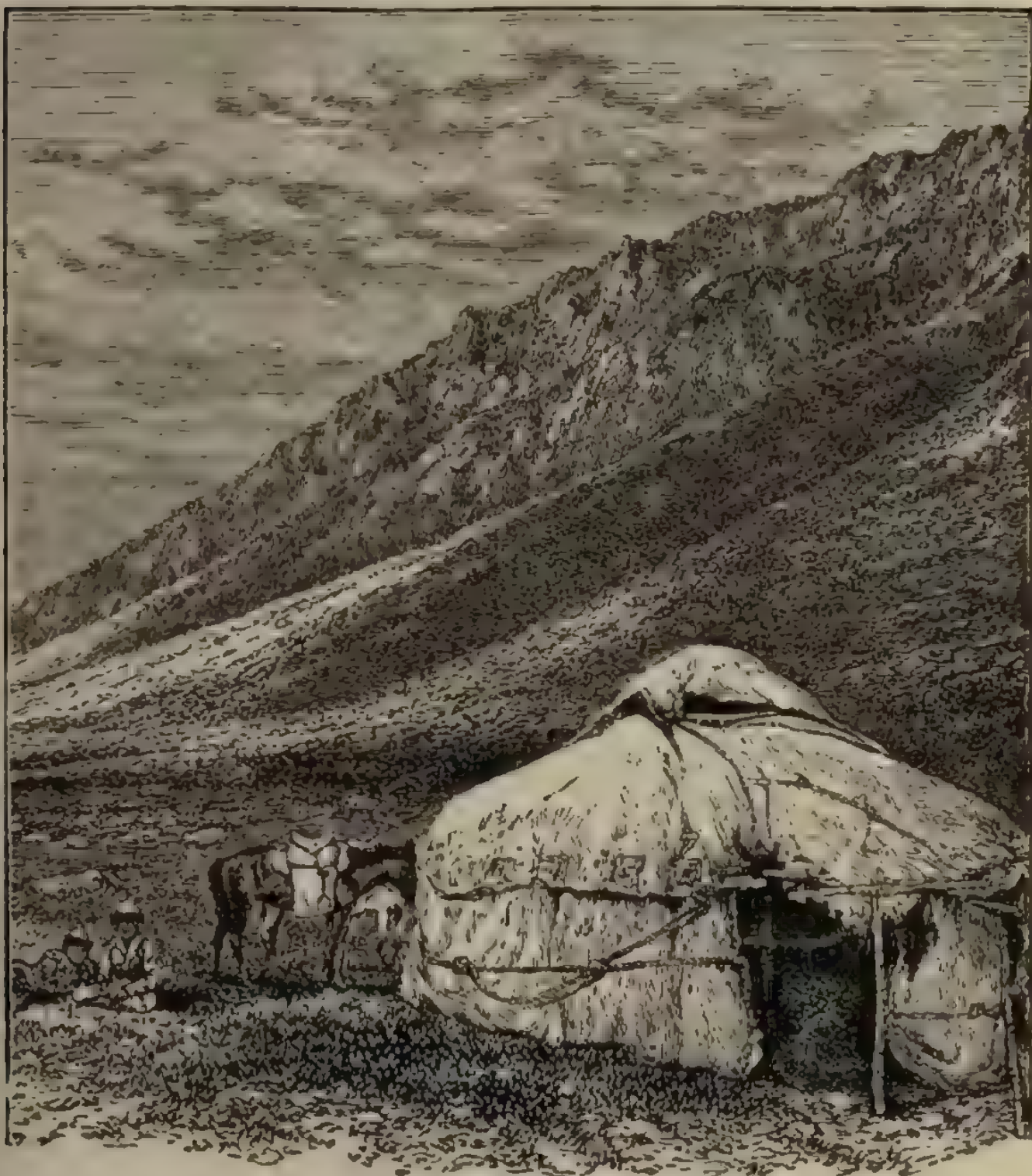
The Kirghese are essentially a nation of shepherds and breeders of cattle, and think it a "come-down" in life when, by force of circumstances, they are compelled to resort to settled occupations. In such an extremity they settle near towns or villages, let themselves out for labourers, as in the Kalbinsk and Altai mines, or flock to the peasant villages in hay-time and harvest, where they are in request as cheap and energetic workmen, one result of which is that in a generation or two they become civilized, dress like Russians, and call themselves Christians. Others turn their attention to agriculture. These poorer Kirghese are called *Iginchas*, and may be said to form the settled element of the Kirghese population.

Cattle-breeding, however, speaking generally, is the occupation of the Kirghese, some of whom are said to possess hundreds of camels, thousands of horses, and tens of thousands of sheep and goats. They own, likewise, horned cattle, but not in such large numbers. The Kara-Kirghese are not so rich as their *confrères* of the Great and Middle Hordes. Very few of the Dikokamenni, for instance, possess as many as 2,000 horses, or 3,000 sheep. They keep fewer camels, but, on the other hand, have an excellent breed of oxen, employed for traversing the mountains. Their cows are large, but yield little milk, and then only just after calving. Their Yaks yield more milk.

The mode of life of the Kirghese is necessarily affected by their cattle-breeding, which requires constant moving about to find pasture. Nomadizing generally begins in early spring, and continues all the summer, the wanderers returning in late autumn.

Ordinarily they wander in small *auls*, or collections of kibitkas, numbering up to 10 in the Orenburg region, but often of 15 or more further east. Their

route depends on the time of year and the state of the grass, but, generally speaking, up to the middle of the summer, it is further and further from the winter quarters, to which they return by stages in



A KIRGHESE TENT IN SUMMER PASTURE, NEAR THE SOURCES OF THE KORA.

autumn. The winter pasturages are often by the banks of streams, from which the herdsmen are driven in April or May by the drought and insects. They then ascend the rich mountain slopes with their flocks, leaving the camels behind to shift for themselves,



A KIKONESH "PEROKOCNEVKA," OR FLITTING.

unwatched, feeding on the salt soil herbage. We saw several apparently thus left. In July or August the men descend to gather their crops, and then pay another visit to the mountains before winter, to gather the later harvest there. In the Orenburg district, if the grass is good, the summer nomads are distributed pretty equally over the whole steppe ; but if there is drought in the south, then masses of Kirghese, in their search for grass and water, proceed to the extreme north of the steppe, a distance of 600 or 700 miles from their winter quarters on the Syr-daria.

These wanderings the Kirghese call *perokochevka*, and they are thus conducted. The pasture in the neighbourhood being exhausted, first by the camels biting off the tops of the grassy stems, followed by the horses, which gnaw the grass closer, and the sheep, which nibble it down to the roots, one or two of the mounted young men are sent from the *aul* to select a suitable spot for a new encampment, and to clear out the wells. This done, the women pack the kibitkas, the head of the household merely looking on, whilst the other men form the cattle into droves. The camp is packed, and starts before dawn, the good woman of the family riding in front. We met one old lady in this honourable position, mounted astride a bullock, and looking anything but graceful. After her came the other women, one young girl, I remember, sitting on a horse covered with a gay saddle-cloth, and wearing her best clothes, as is usual on such occasions. On the camels are packed carpets, *samovars*, tents, etc., the whole being made to wear a festive aspect. Since all the cattle do not move at the same pace, the herds soon straggle, so that a moving *aul* may occupy a length of several miles. Generally speaking, the men during a march ride somewhere off the road, or go hunting. The length of a stage is from 13 to 17 miles, having done which they rest awhile, as also on summer afternoons, for an hour. The *aul* then again

moves forward, traversing about 25 miles in 24 hours. When stationary, the herds are milked in the early morning, and are driven to their pasture by mounted shepherds, who bring them back in the evening. Cows, sheep, and goats are milked morning and evening only, but mares three times a day, or oftener, in which latter case only a small quantity is given at each time. The lambs and kids are sometimes penned in extempore folds, or wander near the *aul*, guarded by children, who not unfrequently make companions of them inside the tents.



A KIRGHSE "BAIRICHE," OR SENIOR WIFE.

Among the Kirghese the practice of polygamy obtains; but since the maintenance of wives and the money given to parents for their purchase are burdensome, the poorest Kirghese usually restrict themselves to one wife. Some have two or three, and the rich four. Generally the eldest brother of a family has more than one. The first wife is mistress of the household, and is called *baibiche*. To her are subject not only her husband's other wives, but also all the other females of the family. The head of a household will often send a portion of his herds several hundreds of miles away under the care of this wife, whilst he

himself will either remain with his other wives about the grazing ground, or go and encamp somewhere by himself. In winter the family comes together again.

The manifold circumstances connected with marriage among the Kirghese are somewhat formidable. It is a custom for men, even before they are fathers, to strengthen the bonds of friendship by agreeing to a marriage between their future offspring, so that many a couple are "engaged" before they are born, though it frequently happens, of course, that such arrangements are broken through. Fifteen is the marriageable age, and preliminaries are commenced by the parents of the bridegroom selecting from three to ten kinsmen, or friends, as matchmakers, called *kouda-tusser*, who proceed to the parents of the bride, offering presents, and among them, specially prepared for the occasion, a dish of liver and mutton fat, called *konyruk-baour*, which signifies that they "mean matrimony," after which the compliment is returned by presents and a similar dish, sent by the girl's parents to those of the bridegroom. These gifts are called *kiet*. The bride's father then calls together his kinsmen, to decide the *kalim*, or gross amount to be paid for the bride. Also a mullah should be present to ask three times of the parents or relations contracting the union, "Do you consent to unite your children?" and then to read prayers for the happiness of the future couple in the presence of witnesses, or of umpires, chosen to settle differences, should any arise between the parties making the contract. The *kalim* may be 40, 60, or 120 sheep, or 9, 17, 27, 37, or 47 head of cattle, according to the means of the bridegroom. Besides the *kalim*, the bridegroom has to give presents called *bash-yakshi* (good head), and *ayak-yakshi* (good feet), that is, either nine camels; or one camel, a horse, a cow, and a fire-arm; or, if the man be poor, the *bash-yakshi* takes the form of 1 or 2 camels, with a horse, and the *ayak-yakshi* of a horse, cow, and *khalats*. These things

settled, the bride's father sends to the bridegroom's *aul* for the *kalim*, or two-thirds of it, and one of the *yakshi*, after which the bridegroom, having fed the bride's messengers, takes the other *yakshi*, generally the *bash-yakshi*, that is called the "*ilu*," and goes to see the bride for the first time. The delivery of the *ilu* has great importance, in that it virtually closes the bridal contract—so securely, indeed, that, should the bridegroom die thereupon, the girl has to go to his parents.

In some places, before the bridegroom starts, his father gives a family feast, clothes the youth with a rich robe, mounts him on a good horse, with the best of saddles and harness, and sends him away after a mullah's prayers for the traveller's safety. Arrived at the bride's *aul*, the young man states his business, and asks permission of her father to pitch his white tent. This he does for about three days, during which he gains over the women by presents to procure for him a private interview with his betrothed. The two now see each other for the first time, perhaps; but since the *kalim* and the *ilu* have been paid, the contract is virtually closed, and neither can draw back without some little difficulty. The interview is commonly by night, and supposed to be kept secret from the parents, to whom the bridegroom gives more presents for the right of visiting his betrothed by day.

If during the period of betrothal the girl should die, her parents are bound to give instead their next daughter, or, in default of one, to return the *kalim*, and pay also a fine of one or two horses and *khalats*, or furs. So also, if the girl should refuse to marry, which she may do on account of a suitor's ill-health, his bad conduct, or poverty, or as allowed in some localities, her dislike. Another custom is, that if the bridegroom die, or refuse to marry the girl, his parents are bound to take her for their next son, paying a fine—usually a camel—in case of refusal. Should there be no brothers, the *kalim* has to be returned, subject to

the limitations just alluded to. In cases of double marriages, where brother and sister marry sister and brother respectively, the *kalim* is omitted.

When the prescribed period of betrothal is at an end, the bridegroom, dressed and mounted at his best, goes with friends to the *aul* of the bride, where a kibitka has been prepared for his reception. Throughout the ceremonies of betrothal, the bride's brother has the right of pilfering from the bridegroom whatever he pleases. But now the bride's relations come and take as presents almost everything he has: his coat, hat, girdle, horse, saddle, etc., pleading that they are for the education of the bride—a seizure that is afterwards balanced by the relations of the bridegroom on the visit to their *aul* of the relations of the bride. The bride's parents are bound to give up the bride when the *kalim* is paid, giving her in dowry a kibitka, a camel, or riding-horse, and cattle, also a bride's head-dress, called *saoukelé*, or, if poor, another kind, called *jaoulouk*, besides a bed, crockery, and a trunk of wearing apparel.

Whilst this "trousseau" is in preparation, the bridesmaids gather towards evening to dress the bride and to sing songs, and, all being ready, the happy couple, richly clad when possible, are led into their tent for the final ceremony. The mullah places them in the midst, puts before them a cup filled with water and covered with a cloth, and begins the prayers. Then he asks the contracting parties if it is with their full consent they engage themselves in the bonds of matrimony, and gives them three times the water to drink, offering the remainder to the bystanders, or, if they are numerous, sprinkling them therewith. Some mullahs put in the water-vessel an arrow, with a tuft of hair tied to it from the mane of the bride's horse, or one of her ribbons; others dip therein a paper of written prayers. This ceremony over, for the girl's head-dress, worn thus far by the bride, is substituted that of a woman, her friends singing the while. In some districts, the

husband then comes on horseback to the door and asks permission to enter. This being refused, he obtrudes, as it were, by force, and takes her away to a private tent.

The happy completion of a marriage is followed among the Kirghese by feasting and games ; and when the newly-married are about to depart, the whole *aul* assembles ; the father puts his daughter on her horse, which he leads to the side of her husband, and they depart, amid women's tears and men's farewells, with the camels carrying the trousseau, and the portion of his wealth which a father gives to each of his daughters on her marriage. On arriving at the husband's *aul*, his father gives a feast. Close at hand is pitched the new wife's tent, wherein are displayed all the articles of her trousseau. These are seized by, according as they please, her new relatives, who are greedy of presents, they giving others, but usually of less value, in return. The bride, having thus made her *début*, if she wishes to show her activity, rises very early during the first few days after her arrival, to uncover the top of the tents of her husband's parents. She retains her own tent* and trousseau ; and even her cattle brought in dower a wise husband does not mix with those of his other wives, because they descend to her children only, and not to other children of the husband.

Thus it will be seen that marriage *à la Kirghese* is, if committed only once, a somewhat expensive business, whilst for each repetition of the process the amount of the *kalim* rises higher. The whole affair has much of the nature of a civil contract, of which I imagine the woman generally gets the worse. Equality of position is sought by the parents, rather than suitability as to age and temperament ; and " woman's rights " among the Kirghese are few enough. In some districts, it is rue, a woman, when she attains the age of twenty-three,

* Reminding one how Isaac brought Rebekah "into his mother Sarah's tent," and how Laban entered Jacob's tent, and Leah's tent, and Rachel's tent (Gen. xxiv. 67, and xxxi. 33).

may marry a husband of her own choice ; but at that period of life, in the steppe, she is considered to have passed the flower of her age. Again, in case of ill-treatment by a husband, a wife may complain to a *Bi*, who will probably get the man to promise to keep the peace, or condemn him to be flogged.

Marriage among the Kirghese may be dissolved by separation or divorce, either of which usually raises the *kalim* as a bone of contention. For separation, the following among others are admissible causes—(1) Mutual agreement. The husband permits his wife to marry another man on condition that he receives a *kalim* and costs. The document drawn up for this agreement is called *talag-kagaz*, a “paper of separation.” (Like the *βιβλίον ἀποστασίου*, or “bill of divorcement of Isaiah l. 1 ; Mark x. 4.) Should the wife return to her parents, the father is bound to return to the husband half the *kalim* paid for her, and the other half on the moment of her marrying again. (2) For a certain sum paid to him, or her dowry, the husband may give a paper of separation at the wife’s request. So, likewise, (3) the husband, ceasing to care for the wife (as in Deut. xxiv. 1), may give her to another man for a *kalim*. This looks, according to Kozloff, as if the woman’s consent were not necessary ; but I was told further south, in Bokhara, that a man could not ordinarily put away his wife, except by her consent.

The marriage contract may be terminated by divorce, on the plea of poverty or the husband’s cruelty ; in which cases the wife may marry her brother-in-law, or whom she pleases, and retain her dowry, but her future husband must pay a *kalim* to the first. In former days the Kirghese were strict in their observance of what the Jews called *yebamoth*, or levirate marriage, that if a man’s brother die, and leave a widow, his eldest brother should take the widow ; but nowadays the custom is dying out, and though

the widow remains with her husband's relations she is no longer compelled to marry one of them, or indeed to remarry at all. I remember seeing a Kirghese widow come in a supplicating manner to a Russian civil authority, begging that she might not be forced to marry her brother-in-law, to whom she was averse; but, then, she was also averse to giving up the *kalim*; the Kirghese law being, in such a case, that if she were childless, and wished to remain single, she could retain only a portion of her husband's property, though if she had children she might keep the whole.

This brings us to the Kirghese laws concerning inheritance, that are said to have caused formerly much contention after a father's death. A father now divides his inheritance, as a rule, during life* amongst his grown-up sons, either on their marriage or soon after, care being taken that the children only receive the portion that comes to them from their own mother, and not that of the other wives. Such a division is made verbally in the presence of dignitaries, or it may be confirmed by a signature witnessed by them.†

I have thus entered somewhat fully into the Kirghese laws respecting marriage, family rights, the relation between man and wife, inheritance and division of property, partly because these customs of the steppe illustrate at so many points the pastoral life of the Hebrew patriarchs,‡ in connection with which I shall

* As did Abraham (Gen. xxv. 5, 6).

† It is not invariably, moreover, that only children inherit a man's property, for faithful servants may be included, who have looked after the cattle, or watched the interests of the family. Abraham said: "The steward of my house is this Eliezer, of Damascus . . . and lo, one born in my house is mine heir" (Gen. xv. 3, 4).

‡ Thus in Gen. xxiv. we see the eldest servant of Abraham's house acting the part of what the Kirghese would call a *kouda-tusser*, or matchmaker, in seeking for Isaac a wife, and taking with him ten camels, a portion certainly of whose burden consisted, if not of a *kalim*, yet of presents of silver and gold, and clothing, which he gave not only to the bride, but also to her mother and brother. So again, in Gen. xxxiv., the Hivite prince, Hamor, acts a similar part on behalf of his son in proposing a marriage with Dinah the daughter of Jacob. Further, the young man Shechem recognizes the propriety of a *kalim*

be able to point out further illustrations in things that came under my own observation.

and presents, saying, "Ask me never so much dowry and gift" (מָהָר וּמִתֵּן), the former word, in each of the three cases where it occurs in the Old Testament, being always used in connection with marriage, and the latter word for a gift generally. The custom obtained also at the time of the promulgation of the law, in which we read (Exod. xxii. 17), of "the dowry of virgins," and which evidently had not disappeared in the days of David, who, thinking too humbly of himself to become a king's son-in-law, was told "the king desireth not any dowry." So again, one thinks, of course, of the question of the Sadducees (Mark xii. 19, and Luke xx. 28): "Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother." But though Moses wrote this (in Deut. xxv. 5), the custom had existed as far back as the days of Judah, the great-grandson of Abraham, whose two sons, Er and Onan, were successively husbands of Tamar, who afterwards waited for a third son, Shelah. The interesting question therefore arises, whence this custom was introduced among the Kirghese? A somewhat bold suggestion has presented itself to my mind, which I put forward not as a theory, but as a suggestion only, that when Abraham dismissed his wife Keturah's sons (Gen. xxv. 1—6), giving them gifts, and sending them away from Isaac "eastward unto the east country," they may very well have taken the custom to, or learnt it in, the land of Chaldea, whence Abraham came, and from whence it might have spread further east beyond the Oxus and Jaxartes to the north of Central Asia. The distance from the Ur of the Chaldees to the Jaxartes would be easily covered in two summers' wanderings. Whether this suggestion involves any anachronisms or contradictions I know not; but, if true, it seems to confirm my idea, that in the Kirghese steppe one sees perhaps the type in the present day most nearly resembling the oldest pastoral life recorded in the pages of history.

CHAPTER XII.

A VISIT TO THE NOMADS.

Visit to Kirghese at Suigati.—Their tents.—A Kirghese memorial.—Milk and other beverages, with flour food.—A mutton feast.—Kirghese politeness, and right of precedence.—Connubial arrangements.—Myself questioning and questioned.—Kirghese poetry and songs.—Their religion: Muhammadan, Pagan, or Manichean?—Kirghese registered as Muhammadans.—New Testaments accepted.—Conversation upon the state after death.—Influence of the mullahs.—Kirghese election of judicial officers.—Native courts and fines.—Judgment and judges.—Election of a volost chief.—Laws concerning assault.—A fight quelled.

I EXPRESSED to the authorities in Semirechia my wish to visit a Kirghese aul, whereupon M. Troitzky, the *Pomoshnik-uyezdi-nachalnik*, or assistant chief of the Vierny district, kindly promised to further my wishes if I would meet him a day's journey in the wilderness at Suigati, where he was to hold a meeting of Kirghese representatives assembled to elect their *bis* or judges. On our arriving there the smiles of the post-master told us we were expected, and we made for M. Troitzky's tent. It was an unusually grand one, measuring 9 paces in diameter, with the roof supported by 120 rods. This the reader will better appreciate if I describe how a Kirghese tent is erected. I chanced in the Ili valley to see a woman begin to put up her tent, and so interested was I that I would not stir from the spot till, note-book in hand, I had witnessed the whole operation.

The component parts of a kubitka are felt and matting, wherewith to cover a framework that consists of a lintel and side-posts for a door, and pieces of trellis-work, surmounted by poles fastened to a central corona. A piece of the trellis-work (called *kiriga*, as I took down the name phonetically from the woman's mouth) resembles a pair of lazy-tongs, or, better still, an English child's toy on which he moves his little company of soldiers, the wooden laths or poles forming the trellis being fastened with a leather thong where



A TRAVELLER'S HALTING-PLACE IN THE COUNTRY OF THE KIRGHISE.

they cross. Four of these *kiriga*, tied together and expanded so as to stand about 4 feet high, made, with the doorway, a circle about 6 paces in diameter, and the whole was girded by a broad band of worsted. Then was hoisted, perhaps 9 feet high, over the centre, a wooden hoop, called *chunruk*, to serve as chimney, ventilator, and window, into the holes of which were thrust the ends of long wooden staves called *ookh*, the other ends being tied to the trellis-work, so that, when the woman had tied 55

of these *ookh*, the framework of her small tent was ready. Huge pieces of felt were then hoisted to the top on poles, and drawn to their position by two bands called *bau*, and afterwards fastened; the covering for the doorway being hung from the lintel like a curtain. The felts did not quite reach the ground, fresh air on this occasion being a desideratum; but there were placed on the grass two pieces of reed matting called *tchi*, fastened inside and encircling the tent to the height perhaps of 4 feet, a binding line being tied round to keep all taut. Besides this, ropes made of horses' manes hung from the hoop or corona inside to keep the tent down, and outside a stake was driven into the ground to windward for similar security. The floor was strewn with felts, a space being left in the centre for the fire.

A small tent such as that I saw erected would cost, when new, from 50s. to 60s., and one of ordinary size about £5. In this case it was being put up for hire at 12s. a month. A large show-tent, such as that provided for M. Troitzky, would cost £100; for this last was 12 feet high in the centre, the felt was lined with silk, and the floor and sides strewn and hung with carpets. It was the property of Nogai Bi, one of the judges, who had provided it for the occasion.

But we were to be conducted to an aul to see a tent in working order. They mounted us on Kirghese horses, the first peculiarity of which I discovered to be that to stop my steed I pulled one rein instead of two. We set off with perhaps a score or two of natives, who seemed to be coming for the fun of the thing, our way lying along a valley flanked by low undulating hills, on which there was not a tree to be seen of the smallest dimensions. "What is that?" said I, pointing to a pile of stones, heaped on an eminence. "Oh!" said they, "a notable man recently died, and when a large number of people

was gathered at the feast that followed his funeral, we raised the heap on that day to his memory." *

Arrived at the aul, we entered the first tent, the owner of which made me welcome, and I began to make note of my surroundings. On the trellis-work were hung all sorts of suspendible things—basins, bags, harness, firearms, leather bottles, skins, clothes, and a Kalmuk *bass*, or box in which to put cups and basins, to be slung on the back of a camel. Behind me were rolls of felt, cushions, carpets, and trunks full of effects, one box of Russian manufacture, with a good deal of metal thereon, being pointed out as something worthy of remark, the like to which is found only in the tents of the rich. In the middle of the tent a huge open saucepan does duty as the principal, if not the only, cooking utensil, whilst around this stand *kurgans* or ewers of metal something like an English coffee-pot, and clumsy pails made of leather, sometimes having a lip. I caught sight, moreover, of a curious staff, the size of a broom-handle, inlaid with brass and steel, with an ornamented top, 2 spans long and $1\frac{1}{2}$ round, that was used to stir the kumiss.

Some of this drink was offered us in a basin, and for the first time I tasted soured mares' milk. My teetotal conscience led me to ask first whether it was intoxicating, and I was told "No." On the other hand, I certainly have read that some kind of alcoholic drink is prepared from mares' milk. Perhaps it becomes so when distilled, or when old and further fermented, in which last-mentioned condition they said it acquired astringent properties, whereas when new it is aperient. I detected nothing alcoholic in its taste, and liked it fairly well. Sevier pronounced

* A living illustration, I thought, of patriarchal times, when Laban and Jacob's brethren made a heap of stones for a memorial between them, and ate thereon; or when Joshua pitched twelve memorial stones in Gilgal (Gen. xxxi. 46, and Josh. iv. 20; see also vii. 26; viii. 29).

it much the same as Scotch buttermilk. I can imagine a thirsty traveller in summer coming in from the steppe enjoying a basin to quench his thirst ; but it was not nice to sip. Moreover, the fact that one is not accustomed to drink mares' milk, and the thought that the beverage had possibly been in the dreadful leather bottle, that is said never to be washed, was not appetizing to an English palate. Besides kumiss, they brought another drink called *airan*, or curdled milk of cows, ewes, and goats, with water—mixed, I presume, for economy's sake, since they said that the rich drank cows' milk alone. They likewise offered dough nuts, made of flour and mutton fat, but no bread, for they live upon the flesh of their animals, fresh or smoke-dried, in winter, and on their milk only, generally fermented, in summer. They make also a kind of cheese, called *irimtchik*, from cows' and ewes' milk.

I am not aware that the Kirghese have any stated hours for meals. They can go without drink for a whole day, and without food for several days, and then love to gorge themselves to repletion. At their great feasts they indulge in horse flesh, but their usual meat is mutton. Some of the extravagant Russian officers, who go to Central Asia to repair their fortunes, and are supposed to have been accustomed to the best cuisines in Petersburg, declare that nothing can excel the Kirghese cooking of mutton, which I can so far confirm that, when we entered a second tent in the aul, and they brought us a dish of this meat boiled, we found it very good.

It was much greater fun, however, to be spectators than partakers of the feast. We had entered the second tent a numerous body, and had placed ourselves, as I supposed, anyhow. But it was pointed out to me that I had been seated in the place of honour opposite the door, whilst my *vis-à-vis*, a few feet off, was the host, who had for the occasion taken the position of

her who would have been his wife in attendance, had he been dining *en famille*. On my left sat a sultan (who formerly had been chief in these parts), and four others of note; on my right were seven *bis*, and in front some aristocratic youths; whilst in the outer circle, "below the salt" and standing, was a crowd of lookers-on. Accordingly, when the meat was brought, the dishes were put before us according to our supposed rank; one to myself, Mr. Sevier, and the Russian officer; another to the sultans' party; a third for the judges; and so on. I heard nothing of "grace before meat," but, dishes placed, I never saw anything to exceed the alacrity with which they were cleared. Hands were knives, and fingers were forks, the meat being torn from the bones as by the teeth of hungry dogs. On such occasions as this, it is a piece of Kirghese politeness for a superior or an elder to take a handful of pieces of meat from his dish and stuff them into the mouth of an inferior or younger guest—an elegancy I saw practised on another, but which, I suppose, my position precluded being exercised on myself.

After the meal, as also before, an attendant brought round a basin and ewer for all to wash their hands; and although there was room for doubt whether one's fingers were the cleaner before or after using the grimy cloth intended for a towel, yet remembering that in the New Testament times forks were not invented, and that equals then ate with their fingers out of one and the same dish, I confess that seeing the custom in the Kirghese tent led me rather to sympathize with the Pharisees, to a degree I had not previously done, in their observance of the custom when they came from the market, of not eating except they had first washed their hands (Mark vii. 3; Luke xi. 38).*

* Our location in the tent likewise, and serving of classes apart, was so far reminiscent of Joseph dining with his brethren, that they set on for

Dessert in the desert comes before instead of after meat, and on this occasion consisted of apples, dried apricots, pistachio nuts, raisins, and walnuts. Feasting over, I continued to apply myself to getting information. My inquisitiveness in the first tent led me to ask what was behind some straw matting I saw, and I was told "a store closet," and a similar inquiry in the second tent as to what was behind a curtain elicited the fact that it was the husband's sleeping place, that was shared with him by one of his wives, the wife or wives left out in the cold sleeping on the opposite side of the tent. This last introduced other topics matrimonial, in the discussion of which it transpired that my host had two wives, the sultan on my left had three, and the one next him four, whilst they informed me that some had five or six; and then came out the surprising intelligence to them that I had none, which seemed to exercise them greatly, for they subsequently asked how it was I had no wives, whilst "these boys here," said they, "has each of them a wife!"

After having peppered them with questions, I thought it only fair to give them a turn, and I therefore inquired, in a vainglorious moment, whether they would like to question me. Shoemaker like, they began to talk of "leather," and asked whether in my country we had cattle, horses, camels, and cows. This I was able to answer with confidence, and though not very well posted in Smithfield prices, I thought if I told them that our cows cost £20 each it would surprise them. And so it did, but the answer led to another question that utterly non-plussed me, for they wanted to know how much milk a twenty-pound cow would

him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians by themselves. They sat also before him the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth. Also Joseph's sending messes to his brothers *from before him* is something like, but an improvement upon, the delicate attention of superior to inferior to which I have just alluded (Gen. xliii. 32—34).

give in a day! Had I known the correct quantity, it would have been difficult for me to have translated it extempore into a Russian standard; and as for Kirghese measures—well, I doubt if they have any. We therefore proceeded to the “next question,” which was whether we had nomads in England who were judged by *bis*? also whether the English and Russians were ruled by the same Emperor, and if not, were we neighbours and friends? to which I was pleased to be able to reply that though we were not under the same Emperor, and could hardly be called neighbours, yet that we certainly were friends.

I now asked for a song, which was no sooner begun than some women put their heads in at the door, and we soon had a full house.

On the occasion of my visit none of the women sang, but two men exercised their powers by extemporizing a song aimed at the judges, the burden of which was that formerly their *bis* were chosen with reference to age and integrity, whereas now it was solely for pelf; and this hit was emphasized by the comparison of a lion and a mouse, to show that ignoble persons were chosen to office instead of the mighty. Others of their sentiments were that “a man who rides one horse can also lead another”; that “a bear is as strong as a lion”; and that “he cares little for a good horse who feeds him badly.” I asked if they would like to hear an English song, and gave them “God Save the Queen,” whereupon I was not a little pleased to find that, though they knew nothing of England, nor whether I was, with the Russians, a fellow-subject of the Tsar, yet they had heard of Queen Victoria, and asked about the Heir Apparent.

I took occasion in this tent to inquire respecting their religion, concerning which Levshine says that it is difficult to decide whether it be Muhammadan, Pagan, or Manichean. All recognize a supreme Creator, but some worship Him according to the Koran;

others mix their Islamism with remains of ancient idolatry, whilst others believe that besides a beneficent God, whom they call *Khoda*, there exists an evil-doing spirit called *Shaitan*, by which name our Kirghese drivers swore. In Palestine, too, I am told "Son of Shaitan" is still employed as a term of reproach.

In the Russian registers, the Kirghese are entered as Muhammadans, and regarded as Sunnis; for though many of them have only a very confused notion as to the two sections of Muhummadanism called *Sunni* and *Shia*, yet they so far espouse the cause of the Sunnis that they consider every one else an infidel, be he Shia, Buddhist, or Christian. Also their religious indifference seems to be preserved only so long as they do not come in contact with people more civilized than themselves, on which occasions they are sometimes fanatical. M. Troitzky, who took me to the tent, told me that, some time before, the Kirghese had been on the eve of an outbreak, because the Government, wishing to take a census, had distributed amongst the auls tablets or cards to be marked so as to show the number of the people. On these tablets, however, the Kirghese discovered a device, whether the Imperial two-headed eagle or what else similar I know not; but thinking it to be intended to make them Christians, they were almost ready to mutiny. It was the knowledge of this, I suppose, that led the Russians to warn me against the distribution of the Scriptures in the Steppe.

I had not forgotten the exhortation, but finding that my host could read, I asked if he would accept a copy of the New Testament, telling him it was the best book we had in England. He took it joyfully, and was evidently pleased to get it. I then asked what they thought became of us after death? Upon which they replied that God had made good angels, called *Mankir*, and bad angels, called, *Nankir*, though when He made them their books did not say, and that two

of these angels sit invisibly on the shoulders of every man from his birth, Mankir being always on the right. Further, that they see all the man does, and write the good and bad in their respective books, which at death are both taken to God, who decides whether the good or ill preponderates, and gives sentence accordingly ; the bad being sent into the fire, and the others to the enjoyment of another life in the world of spirits, where the good find all that they can desire.

It was then my turn to tell them the Christian creed ; how for the putting away of man's sin Jesus Christ came into the world and made atonement on our behalf, offering us freely the benefit of what He has done ; and then, by way of showing them how thoroughly I believed in this, I went on to say that I had travelled some thousands of versts to spread this news, in doing which I had distributed more than 100,000 publications. I hoped, therefore, that they would read the book I was leaving, and that we might hereafter meet again. How much they apprehended of what I said I am not at all sure, for I spoke in French to M. Troitzky, who turned my speech into Russian, and then communicated it through his Kirghese interpreter ; and the reply travelled back to me, by the same channel, to the effect that we all come from one Parent, that God is merciful, and that for a little good in us He pardons the evil. I tried to trace this pardoning love to Jesus Christ, whereupon one of them brought forward a Muhammadan book, in which the Christian prophet was spoken of. This was all done with perfect good temper, and apparently without offence, but I was told afterwards that Nogai Bi, who had accompanied us, was a fanatic, and often harboured in his dwelling *hodjas*, or religious pilgrims, who have been to Mecca, and who, when discovered by the Russians, are sent about their business, because of their evil political influence, and because they fleece the people.

Having finished our visit to the aul, we returned to the stately tent of M. Troitzky to find it surrounded with a crowd of Kirghese, who had come to the place for a popular election. The Russians have, to a very large extent, left the Kirghese to maintain order among themselves by the exercise of their own patriarchal laws. The judge is chosen by the people, and trials are oral and public, conducted according to conscience, relations being defended by relations. Thus every important case becomes a public matter, and is popularly judged, its brightest features being the frequent appeals made to the consciences of the contending parties, and the spirit of reconciliation that generally accompanies the verdict. A marked feature in the transaction is the importance attached by the Kirghese to an oath. They call it *jan-beru*, or "giving one's soul."

Concerning judgment and judges, every volost or district has to select from 4 to 8 *bis*, each of whom may decide cases not involving more than £30.

Thus I had arrived at Suigati on an important occasion, for the Kirghese had assembled for the purpose of electing not merely judges, etc., but a *volostnoi nachalnik*, or chief of the volost, whose office is a paid one, whilst the *bis* are unpaid. On such occasions a representative, called in Russ a *piatedesiatnik*, or fiftieth, is sent by every 50 tents throughout the volost. Their office it is to choose a *bi* for every 200 kubitkas, as also a *volostnoi*, or chief of the volost. The first thing to be done on the present occasion was to call these representatives from out of the crowd by name, the *bis* severally testifying as to their identity.

M. Troitzky then asked the representatives, of whom there were 27, and all sitting in front of his tent door, how much they would pay their chief per annum. Three hundred roubles was the sum first proposed, and then 500, with some dissentients, who were requested to rise, and who did so to the number of 5

only. Five hundred roubles, or £50, being carried, they were asked how much they would allow the chief for his *mullah*, or secretary, and how much for his *djiguitt*, or mounted messenger, whereupon they voted £6 for each. The emoluments of the office being settled, they proceeded to elect the officer, M. Troitzky first reminding them that the office would be held for three years, and that they should, therefore, be careful to choose a good man. A table was placed at the door of the tent, and on it two hats half covered with handkerchiefs, to prevent the contents being seen, whilst before it, in a semicircle, were seated the 27 representatives, to each of whom was given a nut, to be placed in the receptacle for ayes or noes. M. Troitzky told me that on a previous occasion he had endeavoured to ensure privacy of voting by having two basins for ayes and noes put in his tent, but that some of the rascals had taken the nuts from one basin to place in the other. The names of four candidates were proposed, and on the first being named, aged 48, all gave "their pebble" for him but three; in the case of the second candidate the numbers were exactly reversed; the third candidate secured 21 votes in his favour, but the fourth only 7, the election ending in favour of Nogai Bi, who, according to old-fashioned Kirghese custom, ought to have been, like a bridegroom, nearly stripped, then and there, by congratulatory friends of everything upon him, and his belongings seized by one and another as a keepsake. But he was a rich man, and powerfully built, and when they surrounded him with congratulations his demeanour soon showed that he personally thought the custom more honoured in the breach than in the observance.

Thus ended this part of the day's proceedings, and we were taken into the tent for refreshment and to talk over what we had seen. It was very clear that M. Troitzky had no sinecure, for he was single-handed in so far that he had no Russian help, but only that of

one or two Kirghese interpreters. In his uyezd there were 25 volosts, containing in all 40,000 tents. All these he had to inscribe, and help to choose their officers. He was telling us of his multifarious duties, when he was suddenly called to action by some one rushing into the tent, to report a fight going on.

Now the Kirghese laws concerning personal offences are better defined than some others. Thus, to insult a senior has to be atoned for by the fine of a khalat, or bowing to the ground to ask pardon. To insult an equal entails having to ask forgiveness only, and abuse behind a person's back does not count, but naughty children are punished as the parents may desire.

In the present instance M. Troitzky quickly left the tent, and I wondered what gentle methods of persuasion he, the only European there be it remembered except ourselves, would use to pacify the two combatants, surrounded as they were by hundreds of these Kazaks, whose very name bespeaks them ruffians. Would he place himself between, and entreat them to be reconciled? Not a bit of it! I left the tent a minute later to see what he would do, when behold! he had sprung upon his horse, rushed into the crowd, and, whip in hand, was dealing out blows right and left, and scattering the crowd like a pack of curs. His interpreters followed suit, and so speedily had everyone taken to his heels, that it was not easy to find the combatants. M. Troitzky then returned to the tent, having given orders that the man who began the quarrel should be brought to him. One was led forward, shaking in his shoes, and declaring that it was not he who provoked the quarrel, whereupon the Russian officer adroitly answered, "Very well; then go and find me the man who did!" This he left the tent to do, whilst we went on our way.

CHAPTER XIII.

FROM VIERNY TO TASHKEND.

Departure from Vierny.—Journey to Kastek.—Branch road to Issik-Kul.—Arrival at Suigati.—Nogai Bi's cattle.—The River Chu.—An aul of Kirghese.—Birth and naming of children.—Pishpek botanical garden.—Setting a Yemstchik's leg.—Aulie-Ata.—Kirghese wares, industries, and commercial customs.—Visit to Aulie-Ata's tomb.—Muhammadan offerings and religious feasting.—Analogies in Christendom.—Departure from Aulie-Ata.—Journey along the Aris.—Chimkent uyezd, its houses and chief town.—Road through gardens.—Arrival at Tashkend.

WE left Vierny at 10 o'clock on September 8th to continue our journey westwards, our good friend M. von Ghern trotting by our side to give us a Russian farewell. It was beautiful weather for travelling, and not too hot by day, but it became chilly immediately after sunset, and by the small hours of the morning grew cold enough to make one thankful in the tarantass for an Ulster and shawl. For some distance out of the town the land was cultivated on both sides of the road, and beside some of the settlers' dwellings were stacks that might have been mistaken for peat, but were in reality *kiziak*, or dried dung, that is still used as fuel by the natives, even in wooded localities. On our left were the mountains, partially covered with forests, whither many of the inhabitants go to live in *châlets* in summer, and the governor of the province among them. At our first station, Kiskilenskaia, we were offered pretty ornaments of

agalmatholite, or "figure stone," called by the natives *kalyptash*, or stone for bullet-moulds (from *kalypt*, form, and *tash*, a stone). The stone is found within a few versts of Kiskilenskaia, as also between Kopal and Vierny, likewise in Kashgar, and is so soft that it can almost be cut with a knife, or scratched with the thumb-nail. It is sold in Vierny fashioned into paper-weights polished with wax, and pen-trays, two of which M. von Ghern had given me as geological specimens. Our second station was Uzun-Agach (Long Tree), the scene of a battle in 1864, between the Russians and the Khokandians.



SUMMER RESIDENCE OF THE GOVERNOR OF SEMIRECHIA.

Thus far we had travelled only fairly well, for though the broken wheel of our luggage-cart had been mended at Vierny, the vehicle twice broke down before evening, by which time we reached Sam-Su, near the ruins of Fort Kastek. Here a message from the authorities at Vierny had preceded me that horses should be in readiness, and the amiable old post-master, thinking that some one of importance must be coming, had put out bread and salt for a welcome, and he inquired privately of Mr. Interpreter by what titles he should address me.

Had we intended to visit Lake Issik-Kul, this would

have been the point from which to turn our faces southwards over the Kastek Pass, 3,300 feet high, to the head waters of the Chu, along the bed of which the post-road runs through the Buam defile, called by the natives the Happy Pass, to the station Kutemaldi. The beauty of this defile is greatly extolled by travellers. The road then skirts the northern shore of the Issik-Kul, between its extreme western and eastern points.



THE BUAM PASS ON THE ROAD TO ISSIK-KUL.

From Kastek or Sam-Su, where we had arrived at even, the old post-road would have led us up into the mountains to Tokmak, and then on to Pishpek, a route that M. von Ghern had been desirous that I should take, with a view to seeing the Kara-Kirghese in their native haunts. But the road was said to be almost too bad for a carriage, and I had determined accordingly to keep to the lower road, which had been made in 1870 to avoid the steep and dangerous gradients of the old route. Accordingly we drove

along the Kopa valley, passing three stations during the night, and arriving in time for breakfast at Suigati, where the diversion awaited us, described in the last chapter, of a visit to the Kirghese election.

Nogai Bi, whom we saw elected chief of the volost, was reckoned a fairly rich man; but not like Nabal, who had 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats (1 Sam. xxv. 2), or Job, with 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 2,000 oxen, and 1,000 she asses (Job xlii. 12); though these numbers need surprise no one after hearing of the millions of cattle on the Kirghese Steppe. This modern patriarch of our acquaintance owned to possessing merely 150 horses, 500 sheep, 30 cows, 20 camels, 2 tents, and—4 wives! His rich tent, erected for the Russian officer, also bespoke its owner's opulence, as did his massive silver girdle, four or five inches wide, and nearly half-an-inch thick, the value of which he put at a prohibitive figure, though I secured one of his Kirghese rings which is now in the British Museum.*

I took occasion at Suigati to ask the official interpreters, who seemed intelligent fellows, what they thought of the version I had with me of the New Testament. They replied that it was not true Kirghese,

* Nogai Bi's girdle reminded me by contrast of that of John the Baptist. "a girdle of a skin about his loins" (Mark i. 6), and enabled one the better to realize the indignity put upon the Jews in Bokhara by the Emir, who allows no Israelite, however rich, to gird himself with other than a piece of string. Nogai Bi had also four servants, but whether formerly slaves I know not. The Kirghese made slaves of all heretics they could, and even of Shiite Mussulmans, though it is forbidden to Muhammadans to make slaves of their co-religionists, as it was to the Israelites to treat as bondmen their fellow-countrymen (Lev. xxv. 42). They evaded the precepts of the Koran by regarding the Shiites as heretics. This is not allowed under Russian rule; but reference to the custom helps to illustrate another feature in Jewish patriarchal life, where we read of Abraham's "servants born in his own house," and others "bought with money of any stranger." The same practice obtained in Mosaic times, with bondmen bought of the heathen round about. Abram's wealth is seen in his 318 trained servants, with whom he attacked the 4 kings, and delivered men, women, and goods, that had apparently been seized very much in the fashion of a Kirghese *baranta* or Turkoman raid (Gen. xiv. 14, xvii. 12; Lev. xxv. 44).

but "a mixture of Turkish and Arabic, which," said they, "makes Tatar."

On leaving Suigati, after a pleasant stay with M. Troitzky, we once more proceeded westwards, and forded the River Chu. As we approached Constantinovsk, where the Kirghese devote some amount of time at least to agriculture, we passed by the largest aul we had seen. The number of children running about attracted our attention, many of them nude, and evidently brought up under circumstances as rough as those in which they began life; for the mother, having been at work to the last, simply wraps her new-born infant in a cloth in summer, or in a sheepskin in winter, and there ends the business. The one right the mother possesses is to name the new-born child,* and this she exercises in an original manner, sometimes calling her infant by the first object that meets her eye after delivery, whence such curious names as *It-Ayak*, or "dog's foot."

We crossed the Chu by a wooden bridge, and, after driving 15 miles, arrived at 6 o'clock at Pishpek, where the new road, by which we had come, joined the old one from Tokmak. Pishpek is a village with wide streets and a school, wherein the master showed us a small collection of local butterflies and beetles, but the principal object of attraction for us was a large botanical garden, to the superintendent of which, M. Fetissof, we had an introduction. To his house the obliging *starosta* took us, but, unfortunately, he was not at home, whereupon the schoolmaster accompanied us to the garden.

The trees were only young, and the weeds were high, but it was evident that M. Fetissof had before him a vast undertaking, and that he had brought

* With this might be compared the circumstances of birth and giving of names in the cases of Rebekah, the mother of Esau and Jacob; of Rachel, who, in departing, called Benjamin "son of my sorrow"; and of Pharez, who was born before his twin brother, and, in consequence, called a "breach" (Gen. xxv. 25, 26, xxxv. 16, 18, xxxviii. 28, 29).

together a considerable collection of trees, shrubs, and plants indigenous to the region, and that he was making experiments with a view of introducing others. As it was uncertain when M. Fetissof would return, I determined not to stay at Pishpek, but push on through the night, now warmer than heretofore. Morning found us still skirting the mountain range we had had on our left all the way from Vierny. It was a continuation of the Trans-Ili Ala-Tau that, west of the Buam Pass, is called the Alexandrof range. Judged by its Alpine vegetation, it appears to be from 9,000 to 10,000 feet high.

In the course of the night we passed Sukuluk, a settlement with a score or more of houses, and arrived at the fortified place Ak-Su, near which is a village called Belovodsk, with wide streets lined by willows, with a church, a school, and nearly a hundred houses, occupied for the most part by Russian colonists from the government of Voronej and from Little Russia. Dawn found us two stations further, at Chaldavar, where we bought two "Astrakhan" melons, that were considered choice, and by breakfast time we had reached Merke. It is not many years since the line of pickets between Tokmak and Aulie-Ata, with the fortress of Merke, used to form the left flank of the province of Turkistan. Now all wears an aspect of peace. Colonies have been settled about some of the pickets, newly-planted woods constantly appear, the fortress is abolished, the surrounding country is dotted over with the huts of Kirghese labourers, and Merke is enlivened by the presence of post-office and telegraph clerks.

I took advantage of the presence of these latter individuals to send a telegram to General Kolpakovsky, for not until now had we reached the frontier of his General Government of the Steppe, and were about to pass out of Semirechia into Turkistan. I could not but feel how much I owed to his Excellency's care and

attention. All had gone well, and I telegraphed to thank him, and to say how much I had enjoyed my stay.

We were delayed for an hour or two at Merke for the repair of the box I had fastened in the rear of the tarantass, and wherein I had stowed my saddle. This post-house was a vast improvement upon any of those we had recently seen, and was kept by a Pole, who bought a New Testament. From the next station, Munkinsk, we gave a lift to the starosta, who seized



A RUSSIAN COLONIST

the opportunity of our coming to start on a journey, and begged for a place on the luggage vehicle, which vehicle, two stations further on, threatened to delay us through the tire of the fore-wheel coming almost off. Fortunately we found a wayside smith, who quickly put it to rights for 4s., pleading by way of apology for his charges that coal was dear, as indeed it well might be, we thought, in such an outlandish place.

At the next station, Moldabavsk, we had drunk tea,

and were preparing to start, when one of the horses kicked a Tatar yemstchik and fractured his leg above the knee. This was clearly a case for Mr. Sevier's attention ; so he first ordered the man to be put to bed, when it turned out that his sleeping-place was in a sledge, under an open shed. Here, therefore, we bandaged up the limb in a box splint, extemporized splints of split boards, bandaging with towels, and tied round the limb with string. The patient was then laid in the sledge with his leg somewhat elevated, and with pendent stones for weights to straighten the limb. He was told what to do for a month, given some money, and the keeper of the inn enjoined to take care of him, after which his good Samaritan left him, roughly doctored, no doubt, but much better than would have been his lot had no surgeon been there. We then passed three stations during the night, and arrived in the morning at Aulie-Ata.

Aulie-Ata stands on historic ground, with 4,500 inhabitants, in 741 houses, of which only 50 are occupied by Russians, the remainder by natives, of whom Kirghese form the largest proportion. I had, in fact, at Vierny been told that I could purchase the best articles of Kirghese manufacture in Aulie-Ata. Soon after our arrival, therefore, we went to the offices of the chief of the district, where we again found that a telegram had preceded us to facilitate our procuring horses.

The assistant chief and a military officer kindly volunteered to accompany me to the market and bazaar. The advantage of this we soon found ; for not only were these officials accompanied by interpreters, but by *djiguitts* also, mounted forerunners, who preceded us in the narrow crowded bazaar, and speedily cleared the way. Indeed, it was ridiculous to see how unceremoniously the *djiguitts* unhitched standing horses, and set them adrift.

I found exposed here several articles of Kirghese

make and use, among which were native hats, boots, and bridles, some rude jewellery for ear-rings, ornamental tassels for suspending in the tent, and a piece of female headgear called a *tara*, to hang in a double row across the breast of an under-garment, also a *tchinikap*, or wooden receptacle, in which to suspend a basin when travelling. I bought specimens of all these. I also saw exhibited a drink called *airan*, made of whey sweetened with honey and cooled with ice; likewise *tursuks*, or goat-skins, for holding liquids.

The manners of the people were as novel to me as their wares. Here was a man striving to allay the dust, not with a water-cart, but by carrying a skin of water, and sputtering it out of the aperture. Behind the charcoal fire of a Kirghese smith sat an unfortunate individual, whose calling in life was to blow the bellows, consisting of two leather bags he had to press alternately for 12 hours a day, and for which he was paid 2s. a week. At many of the stalls they exhibited in cages, for 8d. each, quails or other small birds caught by hawks. They teach them to sing and to fight. A specimen of the latter exhibition they wished to show me, but I declined. A little further I noticed another curiosity in the case of a hawk, through whose eyelids they had passed and tied a piece of thread in such a way as to draw the lids nearer together for a day or two, the object, I was informed, being to converge the axis of vision, so as to improve the bird for hawking purposes. The market prices did not strike one as exorbitant. For soap was asked 2½d., and potatoes ½d. per lb. Large radishes cost ¼d. each. Salt, found in the neighbourhood, cost 1s. 3d. per cwt., and barley 1s. 6d. per cwt. Timber, however, was expensive, a crooked log, 10 feet long by 6 inches in diameter, being valued at 4s., and a roughly-made wooden bedstead at as much as 24s.

Everything had to be purchased of course by haggling, fixed prices being unknown, and I observed in

the course of my purchases an illustration of a custom as old as the time of Job (xvii. 3), that of "striking hands" in connection with suretyship or agreement. A man had asked me too much for an article, and the Russian officer, who accompanied me, offered a second price, and then, after the Kirghese custom, held out his hand, whereupon the salesman, hesitating a moment, raised his hand, and, in token that he agreed to the bargain, brought it down with a slap on the officer's palm. We chanced to pass a barber's shop, where a man, after having water poured on his head, was shaved without soap with a Chinese razor, and then put through a series of squeezings like those experienced in a Turkish bath, this Eastern barber, as usual, ending by kneading his body, pulling his joints, slapping his back, and cracking his knuckles. Whilst witnessing this operation my eyes fell upon a pair of pincers, the length of curling-tongs, and nearly powerful enough to extract a tenpenny nail. I made bold to ask what they were for, and was told they were for extracting teeth which so tickled my fancy, that I bought them forthwith as a curiosity.

The "lion," however, of Aulie-Ata is the tomb of the local patron saint, that gives its name to the town. The Kirghese make much of the resting-places of the dead. Aulie-Ata (holy father) is said to have been a certain Kara khan, and a descendant of the Sheikh Ahmed Yesavi. We went out to the cemetery, and found there two principal tombs. That of the saint, said to have been buried 800 years ago, is built of dried ornamental bricks, is of no architectural beauty, and is fast falling to ruin. The doors leading to the tomb are carved, and there are remains on the walls of ornamented plaster. Near at hand was erected a pole with a banner, called a *bairak*, usually placed about the tombs of saints, and also near were rams' skulls and horns, the remains, perhaps, of offerings. When thus placed on a tomb, horns indicate that those buried

were saints or heroes, or at any rate powerful or eminent persons. Alexander the Great, who lives in the traditions of the people further south, is called "the double-horned one," as in other parts of the East, I am told, because on his coins are the horns of Jupiter Ammon. This also illustrates the frequent mention in Scripture of the horn as a symbol of power.

We were near coming in for a feast as we approached the next tomb, that of Aulie-Ata's son, for there were gathered about it a small crowd of women and children, who had come there to pray and eat and play. As it was to be my first and probably my only visit, I wanted of course to see the place, and for that purpose pushed my way into the enclosure, among the women and children, but committed thereby, I fear, a breach of Oriental etiquette, for the women crowded together, and hid their faces, leaving, however, an eye uncovered, that they might have a good look at the strangers, but without bestowing a reciprocal favour upon us. We then learned that several club together and buy a sheep, and bring it here, usually on Thursday, to eat, and hold a feast.*

We drove out of Aulie-Ata about noon on Thursday, September 14th, having before us a journey of about 200 miles to the capital. A djiguitt preceded us, thanks to the courtesy of the local authorities, to show us the burial-place of Aulie-Ata, already referred to. Having examined the tomb, we crossed the plains in a

* This reminds one of those Jewish feasts in which religious ceremonies were to be accompanied with eating and rejoicing before the Lord (Deut. xii. 18), and illustrates the doings of the Israelites before the golden calf, when they offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings, and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play (Exod. xxxii. 6). There is also the case of Aaron, and all the elders of Israel, eating bread with Moses' father-in-law "before God" (Exod. xviii. 12). It is interesting to notice that a remnant of this practice still lingers in at least one branch (and that one the most corrupt, perhaps, that I have seen) of the Christian Church—namely, the Armenian. The charge is sometimes brought that they continue to offer animal sacrifices; but, upon inquiring of an intelligent Armenian in the Caucasus, he told me that what they do is the lingering remnant

south-westerly direction for 30 miles, and drank tea at the third station, Tersk, on the stream of that name. We were now approaching the watershed that sends its rivers on one side into the Talas, and on the other into the Jaxartes. The surface here and there was somewhat uneven, as we were reminded at one spot by the driver, who coolly suggested our getting out, informing us that he was going to dash down a place where it was very possible our coach might upset. The vehicle came to no harm, however, and we had a pleasant evening's drive, the horizon to the left being bounded by one of the western spurs of the Thian Shan, the Talasky Ala-Tau.

After leaving Tersk, our road proceeded west for 47 miles along the course of the upper waters of the Aris to the station Yas-Kichu, through a narrow valley that cuts off from the Urtak mountains, the offshoot of the Thian Shan, that forms the Kara-Tau.

We passed over the road near the Aris during the night, and so well did we travel, that between drinking tea at Tersk and arriving early next morning at Chimkent, we accomplished 83 miles. Early in the Russian occupation the uyezd of Chimkent had a nomad population of 17,493 tents. This was in 1868, when the city of Turkistan was included in the uyezd, and the number of occupied houses in the two towns numbered only 3,467. Ten years later it amounted to 7,474, showing an increase of 4,009 inhabited houses, or 116 per cent.

At Aulie-Ata we heard that 72 families of Menonites had lately settled in the vicinity of Chimkent and had received a goodly portion of land.

The town of Chinkent has a population of 5,121

of a heathen practice found in existence by the early teachers of Christianity in the Caucasus, and which those missionaries did not forbid; but that in the present day it is not until after the services on their great festivals that the people slay the animals they have brought and so feast together.

but presents little that is remarkable, except a lofty citadel, of which I saw nothing as we drove through the town and bazaar in the very early morning. The post-station is provided with a double number of horses, and has additional importance by reason of its being at the junction of the two roads from Orenburg and Semirechia, the distance from Petersburg by the former being 2,612 miles, and by the route I had travelled 4,720 miles.

We had nothing to detain us at Chimkent, and therefore posted on 10 miles further to Ak-Tash. We subsequently ascended from an altitude of 1,650 feet over a number of hills, and about noon arrived at the station Bekler-Bek. This is 700 feet higher, and is noteworthy by reason of its old *medresse*, turned into the Russian post-house. Beyond this station the road, continuing south, passed a ruined fortification on the frontier of the Kurama uyezd, into which we passed, gradually descending to the valley of the Keles, near whose river is situated the next station, Sharap Khan.

So well did our horses take us on that we accomplished the next stage of eight miles in three-quarters of an hour, and we drank tea at Djeri, where the post-master evinced his thankfulness for the New Testament I sold him by regaling us with cakes. Two stations further we came to Koplan-Bek, where it became manifest that we were approaching a large town. We no longer had open country on either hand, but the road was confined by the high mud walls of gardens and summer-houses.

And so we approached Tashkend, the head-quarters of the Russian administration. In size and extent, it covers as much ground as Paris. It is one of the largest towns, not only of Turkistan, but of the whole of Central Asia, its population being equalled only by Bokhara, and its extent by Khokand. Tashkend is, moreover, an ancient town, with a beginning lost in the

depths of time. It is situated on the high plateau we had commenced to mount twenty miles from Chimkent. On one side Tashkend touches the Russian quarter, but on the remaining sides it is surrounded by gardens, through which we were passing. Like all large Central Asian towns, Tashkend was surrounded by a high castellated wall, and was pierced by twelve gates, called *darwazas*. The wall took a circular form, and had a circumference of 13 miles, the gates bearing the names of the towns in the direction of which they faced. Now, towards the Russian quarter, the whole of this wall has been taken down and the ground levelled. Here, too, the gates have been removed, though they still remain in the other directions.

Through one of these gates we entered about eight o'clock on the evening of the 15th September, not a little pleased at being back once more within the region of comparative civilization, and perceiving Russian cabs and soldiers about the streets, though there was little enough of light proceeding from the street oil lamps to see them very clearly. We made for what had been recommended to us as the best hotel, but where they had no room, so that we had to try the Hotel "Nicolaeff," a sorry place, yet we were glad of a rest, and still more of a bath, after which it was a real comfort once more to get into beds, to which we had been strangers since leaving Vierny.

CHAPTER XIV.

OUR STAY AT TASHKEND.

Asiatic and Russian Tashkend.—Visit to the Governor-General.—Arrangements for distribution of Scriptures, and my onward journey.—Visits to synagogues and the military hospital.—Asylum for the aged.—The officers' club.

TASHKEND is a dual city, of which the two parts are so distinct and so unlike that a visitor may sometimes walk a considerable distance without meeting a Russian in one or a native in the other. European Tashkend is but of yesterday—Asiatic Tashkend of more than a thousand summers, the Arabs having conquered it so early as A.D. 738.

The population of Asiatic Tashkend, for the more part, is grouped according to trades, and the number of buildings is about 17,500, the population, according to the census of 1868, being 76,000.

There are several good shops in the Russian quarter, where European articles can be procured at about the double of European prices, and, considering the distance and difficulty of transit, this is not perhaps exorbitant. Russian Tashkend boasts, too, of an observatory, about a mile out of the town, a Central Asian museum, and public library, all of which I visited.

My hotel, so called, was situated in the Russian part of Tashkend, where, having arrived on Friday night, my first care next morning was to visit the Governor-General. General Chernaieff, recently appointed to the

office, had not yet arrived from Petersburg, but was represented meanwhile by General A. K. Abramoff, Governor of the province of Ferghana. The chief administration of Turkistan being centred in Tashkend, the palace, as might be supposed, is the finest house in the town. General Abramoff, however, at the time of my visit was staying in the Governor-General's summer villa, in the outskirts of the town—a charming residence buried amongst trees, that, in Turkistan, would be considered fine. Thither we drove, and were ushered into the study of the General, who impressed me favourably by his unassuming dignity and apparent thoroughness.

Having presented the letter I received from General Chernaieff at Petersburg, my first care was to arrange for the distribution of such Scriptures as I had for the prisons, hospitals, and public institutions throughout Turkistan. I inquired how many would be needed for Ferghana, and was at once struck with the minute acquaintance his Excellency appeared to possess concerning his own province. "In the prison at Khokand," said he, "there are 6 rooms; in Marghellan, 16; in Namangan, 8; Andijan, 4, and Osh, 3; whilst the rooms in the hospitals are, Marghellan, 20; Khokand, 10; Andijan, 6; Namangan, 5; and Osh, 5; or you may send 100 in all, in about equal proportions of Russian and Tatar." These his Excellency undertook to distribute as I wished, so that there should be at all times some portion of Holy Scripture within reach of every prisoner and patient in Ferghana, and he kindly undertook also to see the same arrangement carried out for the Syr-daria province.* By a fortunate coincidence it happened that General Ivanoff, Governor of the Zarafshan district, was staying at Tashkend, and paying a visit to the Governor-General at the same moment

* I subsequently learned that in the Syr-daria oblast the prisons and hospitals were situated at Aulie-ata, Chimkent, Tashkend, Khojend, Ura-Tiube, Jizakh, Turkistan, Perovsk, and Kazalinsk; and that I might reckon on an average four rooms to each, except Tashkend; that had fifty.

as myself. He therefore heard my request to General Abramoff, and gladly accepted a similar offer of books for his own province. There were 15 rooms in the prisons, and 25 in the hospitals, he said, of Samarkand, 4 in the prisons and 6 in the hospitals of Katte-Kurgan, and 2 each in the prison and hospital of Penjakend. "About 40 books," he added, "might be sent in Russian, 5 in Tatar, 10 in Persian, and 2 or 3 in Hebrew." Thus at a stroke I had arranged for all the prisons and hospitals of Turkistan, except the mere handful that would be required for the province of the Amu-daria.

My next business was to inquire respecting my journey onwards. I wished to go to Khokand, Samarkand, and Bokhara, from whence, I asked, could I go by Charjui to Merv, or could I float down the Oxus to Petro-Alexandrovsk, and thence to Khiva, and across the desert to the Caspian? The General seemed to think that I ought to see more of Ferghana than the town of Khokand, against which, however, I pleaded lack of time, but he said that they could not protect me from Charjui to Merv, and that it would be impossible or far too dangerous a thing for me to attempt to travel there from the eastern side, whatever might be the possibilities of getting there from the west. As for passing through Bokhara, and floating down the Oxus, this he thought might be done, though with difficulty, perhaps, as to the tarantass; and with regard to crossing the Aralo-Caspian desert they could best advise me as to the safety of attempting that when I reached Petro-Alexandrovsk. At that place lived General Grotenhielm, for whom a letter should be given me, as also for the Emir of Bokhara, and the authorities at Khokand. Nothing, therefore, could have been more satisfactory; and all this kindness was capped by General Ivanoff, who invited me, during my sojourn in Samarkand, to stay in his palace.

A third officer in the room was Colonel Mailievsky,

the Vice-Governor of the town of Tashkend, with whom I made arrangements to be taken on the morrow to the local prison and hospitals, and then drove back to the hotel, with a mind considerably relieved. Not only had I now virtually accomplished the major part of my desire respecting the distribution of the Scriptures, but I began to see the feasibility of entering Khokand and Bokhara, upon which no Englishman living had set eyes, and on the realization of which by myself my friends had been so sceptical. I had feared, too, from various reports on my way, that I might have to return by the less interesting Orenburg route, where the postal service had broken down; or still worse, I might be obliged to retrace the way that I came.

As it was Saturday, I thought that I could not do better than spend the afternoon in a visit to the Central Asian Jews. I had been favoured by Sir Whittaker Ellis, Bart. (who, at the time of my leaving London, was Lord Mayor, and Chairman of the Committee for raising funds on behalf of the persecuted Russian Jews), with a letter, stating that I was travelling with a philanthropic object in connection with hospitals and prisons, and commending me to the courtesy and attention of any who might be able to assist me. This had been translated for me very kindly by Dr. Herman Adler, the delegate chief rabbi in London, into rabbinic Hebrew, and, in addition, I had had the document translated into Russian, Persian, Arabic, and Turki. When, therefore, we were taken to the synagogue in the Russian quarter, I presented this letter as an introduction, and asked whether they had any ancient manuscripts; but so far were they from having things antique that everything appeared almost new. I had rarely before entered a synagogue so clean and bright. The walls had been newly white-washed and ornamented with native painting; and though there was no service going on, there were

several men and boys reading. They manifested the utmost interest in my letter, but had nothing of great ecclesiastical interest to show, whereupon I discovered that we had been brought to the new synagogue of the European Russian Jews, most of whom had come to Turkistan as soldiers, and, on their discharge, had preferred to settle in Tashkend rather than go back to Russia.

We drove, therefore, to the native town to seek the meeting-place of the Asiatic Jews, and after going as far as the *isvostchik*, or cabman, could take us by reason of the narrowness and miserable paving of the streets, we took to our feet, and passing through narrow lanes and alleys, came into a small yard, on one side of which was a miserable shed with a lean-to roof of poles, wretchedly covered, whilst under and all around sat a crowd of people assembled for prayer and reading. On the Friday evening the Jews assemble in the synagogue, which is compared to a bridegroom, to welcome the coming in of the Sabbath, that is beautifully personified in one of their prayers as a bride, whilst on Saturday evening they gather to bid the Sabbath farewell. Whether, on the present occasion, it was this stated Sabbath evening service, or something of a less formal character, I am not sure ; but so surprised did they appear at our sudden visit, and, above all, so curious to get a peep at my letter, that, the service being speedily concluded, all crowded around. From hence we were led to an adjacent part of the bazaar to another assembly, where, within still narrower limits, under a straw roof, a number of grave and reverend elders were sitting on the ground and praying, or reading and intoning. This struck me as a remarkable sight, by reason of the magnificent faces of some of the old men. With their huge turbans, of spotless white, and Oriental flowing robes, they reminded me of the typical Israelites, depicted by Holman Hunt in his picture of finding Christ in the Temple, and

other works.* The miserable accommodation of the Tashkend Jews, even for Divine worship, brought vividly to one's mind to how low a condition this people have sunk in some parts of their dispersion. They read my letter, and received my visit evidently with pleasure, and both showed me their copy of the law, ornamented with silver and precious stones, and also permitted me to look into the cupboard containing



A JEW OF CENTRAL ASIA.

their books. These last did not appear very plentiful, and as I had brought some Hebrew Old Testaments with me, I offered to sell them at reasonable prices if they would come to the hotel. Their *Torah*, or manuscript of the law, had been written and mounted

* The Jews of Central Asia, like the Sarts, shave their heads, except that they leave a lock falling in a curl from each temple. This patch of hair is left uncut, in obedience to Lev. xix. 27, xxi. 5—"Neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard," which, by transference from the beard to the hair, is fairly intelligible; though it is not so patent how they evade the other command—"They shall not make baldness upon their head," for this appears to be the very thing these Jews do.

in Bokhara, but was not remarkable. Their having no synagogue, together with the poverty and ill-furnished condition of their hired place of prayer, was explained to a large extent by the fact that almost all the Jews in Tashkend are traders and sojourners only, and also by the oppression to which, before the Russian occupation, they were subject under the Khans of Khokand. We called later on the leading Jew of the town, named Abdurrhamanoff, said to be a very rich man, who was living in a fine native house, built and ornamented in the style of the Sarts. He had travelled a good deal, but not so far as England.

On Sunday we found that there was no Protestant service in the town, and I was called upon in the course of the day, and asked to conduct one for the Germans; but as my linguistic powers were not equal to this, and they understood no English, I was powerless. I heard of one English woman in the town, but was not so fortunate as to find her at home. After the Russian morning service the *Nachalnik gorod*, or head of the town, took me to visit first the prison, which I shall describe hereafter, and then to the military hospital, where we were received by Colonel Serpitzky and Dr. Proskouriakoff. In both places I distributed something for the inmates to read, and found my pamphlets readily accepted. Whilst driving through the principal open place, we stopped for a few minutes at the grave of General von Kaufmann, who is buried in the middle of the town. A few wreaths remained on the mound, but no permanent monument was as yet erected.

The hospital is in the suburbs, near the Salar Canal. On the 17th September, the day of my visit, there were in the hospital 14 officers, 260 soldiers, and 31 women, 305 in all, out of which number 35 were prisoners. On the corresponding day of the previous year there were in hospital 358 patients. The most common diseases in Tashkend are fever and diarrhœa.

Colonel Serpitzky took us from the hospital to an asylum close by for old men and women, so spotlessly clean and nice that I was constrained to write "*almost too good.*" The asylum had been built largely through the means, I believe, of the Colonel, and is supported by voluntary contributions; but, though they could accommodate 30 inmates, their income allowed of only 7 being admitted. I tasted the soup, and found it so good as to lead me to exclaim, "Would that I could have obtained the like on the road hither!" The falling short of its original conception, apparent in the asylum, points, I am beginning to think, to a failing in the Russian character, of which we were reminded a second time on the same day, when Colonel Serpitzky kindly introduced us to the officers' club, where we could comfortably dine during our stay. "Go to," the committee had said, money in hand, "let us build a club that shall be worthy of so important a place as Tashkend!" and thereupon they had designed a building so pretentious that this sage committee found their money spent, their club incomplete, and themselves exposed to the taunt that they had begun to build, but were not able to finish. We were provided with an excellent dinner—the best we had eaten for many days—and we then returned to our grand hotel, to find that during our absence the Governor-General had honoured us with a call. Later in the evening two German gentlemen paid us a visit, one of whom said that he had come from Khiva in a tarantass, but under exceptional circumstances, and we heard from another quarter that the road was exceedingly difficult. But before we could think of starting south, I had many persons to visit, places to see, and arrangements to make, to the doing of which we addressed ourselves on the Monday morning.

CHAPTER XV.

OUR STAY AT TASHKEND (Continued).

Bible work at Tashkend.—Visit to M. Oshanin at the Museum.—Antiquities and curiosities.—Assistance from Colonel Maieff.—Visit to Asiatic Tashkend.—Purchase of Sart curiosities.—Household commodities.—Imports and exports of Tashkend.—Visit to seminary for training teachers, and to the observatory.—Visit to Colonel Serpitzky at the camp.—Distribution of religious literature.—The public library.—Dining with the Governor-General.—Arrangements for departure.

I TOOK an early opportunity at Tashkend of looking into the prospects there of the British and Foreign Bible Society. For a long time the eyes of the Committee in Petersburg had been turned in the direction of Central Asia before a suitable agent presented himself by whom they could commence operations. At length it came to pass that a body of German sectaries, called Mennonites, to avoid military service in Russia, determined to proceed to one of the independent khanates in Central Asia. Among them was a man who had previously acted as a colporteur, and he proposed that he should take with him copies of the Scriptures, and endeavour to open a dépôt. The Governor-General had given permission that the dépôt might be opened, and I went on the Monday to see the house which had been hired. It was well situated in one of the best business streets of the town, and in the care of Mr. John Bartsch and his brother, but not yet properly fitted. A few books had been sent by the post, by the route I travelled, at great cost and

much damage to the volumes ; but a large caravan consignment was expected by way of Orenburg, which not having arrived, my hopes of replenishing my stock of Asiatic Scriptures were doomed to disappointment. This was the more unfortunate, because I could not send so many copies as I wished in Asiatic languages for the hospitals and prisons, though I left directions at the depôt that they should be supplied ; nor could I increase my scanty store for distribution amongst the Muhammadans. I was able to get 150 additional Russian Scriptures, for which I left 27 copies of Hebrew, Slavonic, and German to render more complete the stock of the depôt, and then I made up at the hotel three parcels of Scriptures and other publications for the prisons and hospitals.* From the acting Governor-General I received a very appreciative note, written thus: "With special acknowledgment I accept the books you have sent, and will order them to be distributed and made use of according to your wish. The report concerning their distribution I shall have the honour of sending you to London. Allow me to thank you with my whole heart for your truly Christian work on behalf of the moral enlightenment of the poor and unfortunate in our district."

We took an early opportunity to call, at the school of silkworm culture, on M. Oshanin, to whom I had more than one introduction, and whose name I had frequently heard mentioned on my way in connection with scientific pursuits. He gave us a hearty welcome, and afforded me much information. He had been a pupil of Professor Bogdanoff, of Moscow, and entomology was his strong point ; his speciality being the study of what are vulgarly called "bugs," but in scien-

* They were sent as follows :—To General Abramoff, for Ferghana, 51 Scriptures and 160 tracts ; to General Ivanoff, for the Zarafshan district, 47 Scriptures and 120 tracts ; and to Colonel Maïlefsky, for the Syr-daria province, 67 Scriptures and 400 tracts ; together with, in each case, 6 copies of the illustrated *Russian Workman*, and 3 of the "Prodigal Son."

tific parlance *hemiptera*, or one of that order of insects that feed on animal or vegetable juices by means of a sucking-tube. Of these he had a very fine collection, exceedingly well arranged, and such was his love of the study, that he had learned English chiefly for the sake of mastering the treasures of its entomological literature. He was able to give me sundry hints as to where I might find information respecting the natural history of Turkistan, and it was from his lips, curiously enough, at Tashkend, that I first heard of a well-known naturalist, Mr. Robert MacLachlan, F.R.S., living in the next parish to my own in England. M. Oshanin secured for me a valuable book I have not yet seen in England on the fauna and flora of the Kyzyl-Kum desert and the Khivan oasis. He had to tell also of an interesting expedition he had made four years previously beyond the Russian border in Karategin.

M. Oshanin is curator of the Tashkend museum, through which we walked and noticed a number of interesting ethnographical specimens, as well as a few antiquities. There was, for instance, a good collection of enamelled tiles and bricks from Kuldja and Samarkand, and a vase with a pedestal found in the mountains near Aulie-Ata, so near the ancient episcopal Almati, that it was thought it might be a baptismal font. There was also a bronze bell, found in the neighbourhood of Tashkend, 6 inches high, with a diameter of 4 inches at the base, with metal $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch thick, but the clapper is wanting. We saw also ancient coins, and some Greek fire bombs of earthenware, with grooves on the convex side. To the foregoing may be added sundry Buddhist idols, in metal, and one in trachyte. There were, likewise, certain botanical specimens, as the sponge plant, having a fruit resembling sponge inside, which is used by the natives; and *chigi*, a textile plant cultivated at Kuldja. M. Oshanin not only showed us all that he thought might be interesting, but kindly gave me a small collection of Turkistan seeds,

chiefly cereals, and two live tortoises, which it was supposed I might be able to get safely to England.

There was another gentleman to whom I had an introduction, and whose acquaintance I was thankful to make, who has done so much, both by his travels and his pen, to make the country known. I mean Colonel Nicolai Alexandrovitch Maieff, the well-known editor of the *Turkistan Gazette*. I could have had no better authority for accurate information and statistics concerning Central Asia, and I was gratified by his telling me that the Governor-General, who seemed to expect that I should make a longer stay than I did, had asked Colonel Maieff to be of use to me, which he was abundantly ready to be, both in making excursions, and in providing me with a number of Russian books not easily accessible, and in some cases not existing, in England. He also gave me several photographs, and put me in the way of getting others, many of them by amateurs, which have helped to illustrate my writings.

I had introductions to nearly a score of persons in Tashkend, and so need hardly say that our time was fully occupied. Early on Tuesday morning Colonel Poukoloff came to invite us to dine on the day following at the palace of the Governor-General, and he then conducted us to the Asiatic part of the town. We took a droshky for this purpose, our conductor remarking that he could not take his own carriage into the native town by reason of the roughness of the roads, and the consequent damage to any but the strongest of carriage-springs. Before us rode a djiguitt and two *aksakals*, or native elders, with a rich Sart, said to be a friend of the Colonel's, as interpreter, and these signs of importance going before, and our conductor being known as the head of the town, we had a good opportunity of witnessing the respect that is paid by Orientals to one high in office. When the crowds caught sight of us they not only respectfully made way and stood on either side of the street, but those who were

sitting arose, and such as knew the Colonel personally stroked their beards. Men on horseback dismounted, stood, and bowed, and laughing children running about suddenly pulled up at the roadside in perfect order until we had passed. It was, in fact, just as if I had suddenly sprung back to a stage of civilization portrayed in the Book of Job.*

The only building we saw in Old Tashkend that I deemed worth making a single note about was the Medresse Beklar Bek, built of brick, now having only



SARTS IN THE BAZAAR.

about 50 students, but from the top of which we gained a view of the uninteresting Asiatic town. The low, flat housetops of earth, the want of regular lines of streets, and the absence of colour about the houses, made the city one of the most dismal I had ever looked down upon. Few of the buildings had an upper story, the dull monotony of the plain of roofs

* Job xxix. 7, 8: "When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street! The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth."

being relieved only by bald mosques and minarets, or, sometimes better, by trees. We continued our way through very narrow, ugly streets to the old bazaar, composed of rows of dirty-looking shops, there being frequently stretched overhead a loose roofing of dried branches, that had doubtless a few weeks back done service in keeping off the rays of the summer sun.

The new native bazaar in Russian Tashkend is cleaner, and better stocked, and therein we had procured abundance of excellent fruit; but we were now in search of antiques and native curiosities. We saw displayed Bokhariot and Kashgar carpets or rugs, the former about £4 each, the latter half that price. A very handsome Sart tent, lined with native silk throughout, that would have looked exceedingly well on an English lawn, was offered us for £12. It was, of course, too bulky for me to carry, or at least I thought so, and I had to confine myself to the purchase of smaller things. Prominent among these was a *chambar*, or pair of chocolate leather pantaloons, gorgeously embroidered in all the colours of the rainbow. At the bottom they are big enough for a lady's waist, and none but a Falstaff could ever hope to fill them at the top, so that when first offered to me, who am of proportions Slender, I laughed outright. I was bidden, however, not to despise them, for that when I came to horseback travelling I might find them both warm and at the same time useful, when tied at the bottoms, for stowing away one's linen or other goods as in veritable "bags." I was glad to get some native pockets and purses, together with the leather suspender to which they are tied, and hung from the girdle, something after the fashion of a lady's chatelaine, and of which they are so much a part that the whole girdle and things suspended therefrom are called by one name, *kalta*.* We purchased pocket handkerchiefs and skeins

* Similarly we read, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass, in your purses,"—*ἐν ταῖς ζώναις*, literally, in your *girdles* (Matt. x. 9).

of native silk, the latter very glossy, and dyed and sold largely by the Jews, who from the numbers we saw in the bazaar, and their begrimed appearance, gave one the idea that they engage a good deal in handicrafts, especially dyeing. There were on sale, too, *tibeteikas*, or skull caps, constantly worn by the Muhammadans, even in-doors. Some of these caps from Shahr-i-sebz in Bokhara show great taste and skill in needlework. A specimen Central Asian padlock I secured is of iron,



A SART IN TIBETEIKA AND KHALAT.

with a cylindrical body, the key being formed of a tube with a female screw, which, fitting on a screw in the lock, on being turned, withdraws the bolt from the hasp. Fairly good Russian knives were plentiful, but the native scissors, with blades angular in section, were so clumsily made as to be worth buying for a curiosity. Embroidered slippers, such as I had seen in the Caucasus, were offered for sale, but were not so remarkable as some thin muslin handkerchiefs or shawls, embroidered in flossy silk, with the peculiarity

that the work is alike on both sides. This constantly attracts the attention and puzzles the skill of my lady friends, who say they could not do the like. I bought for the British Museum a Central Asian *chilim*, or water-pipe. The body is formed of a gourd mounted in engraved brass, filled in with red and black, and set with imitation turquoises. The stems are of reed, engraved and blackened, and the bowl of pale red ware painted in cream colour on a brown or red ground, with green borders, brilliantly glazed. But the purchases in Tashkend I treasure most are an embroidered cushion cover of soft leather, and a very handsomely embroidered table-cloth, in which the colours are boldly but beautifully blended, never failing to call forth the admiration of those who see them.

Thus far I have spoken of curiosities and fancy articles. Domestic expenses in Tashkend may be judged from the following mention of prices. House rent is dearer than at Petersburg, and the same, I should think (judging from one house and grounds quoted to me at £80 per annum), as in provincial towns in England. Domestic servants on board wages receive from 12s. to 18s. per month, a nurse 16s., and laundress from 16s. to 20s. Russian men-servants expect 30s. a month and upwards, but natives from 16s. to 18s. White bread costs 1½d. a lb.; cooking butter 8d., and fresh butter 3s. a lb.; a sucking-pig from 2s. to 4s.; the best beef and veal, 1¾d. a lb.; a turkey from 12s. to 14s.; a chicken 8d. to 1s.; and pheasants 10d. each.

With regard to the import and export trade of Tashkend, some faint idea may be formed of its extent from the fact that in 1876 goods arrived at the town from Russia, Bokhara, Semipolatsk, and various parts of Turkistan and Semirechia, on 23,669 camels, 804 carts, and 1,355 horses. Over against this there were sent away goods on 2,323 camels, about half of

which went to Russia, and a fourth each to Khokand and Asiatic Tashkend. There is a spring and an autumn fair at the capital.

On leaving the bazaar in Asiatic Tashkend we returned to the Russian quarter of the town to visit the seminary for training schoolmasters, and here we met the Vice-Governor. There were 55 pupils, 11 of whom were Kirghese. The institution reminded me of a similar one I visited in 1879 at Kasan, where youths from the surrounding native tribes were educated without payment, and sent back to their various nationalities as instructors. Upon mentioning that I had visited the place at Kasan, the director of the Tashkend seminary told me that he was trained there. The course at the seminary comprises the studies followed in the first four classes of the *gymnase*, or high school. I was much pleased with their singing, and noticed that each member of the choir, singularly enough, had light hair. They produced a powerful body of harmony, that was heard to good effect in the "Prayer of Alexander Nevsky," Lvof's "National Anthem," and in the chromatic progressions of the beautiful "Cherubim" by Berdniansky. I sent a few Scriptures for distribution in this seminary.

Our visit to the seminary over, we drove to the observatory, getting on the way a good view of the broad streets of Russian Tashkend, and in the suburbs of some of the substantial merchants' houses with their gardens. We received a hearty welcome from M. Pomerantzoff, the director of the astronomical observatory, to whom I presented my introduction from Captain Rykatcheff, chief of the meteorological observatory in Petersburg. He willingly showed us all that was of interest, and gave me a record of the local temperature and precipitation (or fall of rain, snow, sleet, and hail) of the preceding year.

After seeing the observatory, we went to pay an evening visit to the camp, where we found Colonel

Serpitzky in command of a battalion of a thousand men of the 12th Turkistan infantry. We were shown the canteen and barracks. They struck me as decidedly lacking in comfort, and, although the men looked cheerful enough, I could not help suspecting that English soldiers would not have been so amiable in such quarters. The *Turkistan Gazette*, alluded to earlier in this chapter, speaks of a recent revision of the Turkistan province by Senator Giers, who found that enormous sums of money had been recklessly spent on handsome buildings, club houses, luxuriant dwelling-houses for military and other officers, while the troops have been located in unhealthy and hastily as well as cheaply- and badly-built barracks. This last charge, judging from the one barrack I visited, I should be disposed to confirm. There were not wanting tokens, however, that Colonel Serpitzky personally took great interest in the welfare of his men, for whom he evidently spent both his time and private means. Their leisure hours were thought of, and I saw not only reading material of a secular character provided for them, but in a small cupboard was a stock of Russian copies of the Gospels, one of which I heard was presented to each soldier on the expiration of his term of service, to the number of about 1,000 a year, and that about 10,000 copies had been put into circulation by sale or gift. The Colonel had done this, if I mistake not, in connection with the *Russian Bible Society*. I need hardly say that I was glad to meet a fellow-volunteer, as I also was to come upon the track of another at Vierny, where I found in the prison some New Testaments, Gospels, and other works that had been provided by a M. Pantusoff from a Russian society for the distribution of religious books.

The Tashkend public library we visited on a subsequent day. The greatest work in the library consists of a collection of information relating to Central Asia generally and to the Turkistan district in particular.

I was told that almost everything that had been published since 1867 on Central Asia, such as articles in papers and journals, and likewise every pamphlet and book, had here been gathered by the bibliographer Mejoff, and placed in chronological order in large volumes, now upwards of 300 in number, in uniform binding—an excellent work, truly, and one for which I, who have searched the London libraries through in making a similar list, ought of all men to be thankful. And so I am; though I doubt the absolute completeness of Mejoff's work, for I have found some publications other than Russian in the languages of Western Europe that are not in his list. I, however, think that his great work and my own little bibliography combined must approach very near completeness, as regards *books* published on Central Asia. There is just one peculiarity in the work of my distinguished co-labourer, to which I cannot resist playfully alluding. I mean the binding the books all of one size, which entails this amusing result, that when a book comes to hand that is smaller than the procrustean binding, the leaves are cut at the back and pasted singly on pages of blank paper cut through to the size of the letterpress; which is uncomfortable, but bearable. When, however, a book has come to hand larger than the regulation size, the leaves have actually been turned in to reduce the dimensions; the consequence of which is that the reader must unfold, and in so doing not improbably tear, each leaf before he can read it!

On the Wednesday evening we had the honour of dining with General Abramoff. Our host is a bachelor, and there were no ladies present, but several officers of distinction. Unfortunately for me, the General did not speak French, and though there was no lack at the table of persons who did, yet having to speak through an interpreter to the Governor-General prevented that full enjoyment of intercourse which I feel sure I should

have experienced could we have communicated our ideas directly ; for what I saw and all I heard of him led me to form a high estimate of his character as a governor. One of those in office under him told me that his subordinates simply "adore" him. It had been suggested to me that I should ask for two or three Cossacks to accompany us for security when out of Russian territory, but the General said that he could not grant that, for even embassies, when going to Bokhara, did not have them ; but he would give me letters, open and otherwise, that would help me everywhere on my route. He said, moreover, that he should hear about us, and requested that, if we got into difficulty, we would send to him at once. On leaving the vice-regal residence we called at a small house in the grounds, where General Ivanoff had taken up his quarters, to whom I am afraid I had not paid sufficient attention in calling earlier at his private dwelling, though I had done so at his offices. His Excellency was not to return to Samarkand for some time, but promised to write to his servants that we should be entertained in his palace.

Our official arrangements being now adjusted, we had to think of personal affairs, for we were about to plunge into a region comparatively unknown, and be lost for a while to European civilization. Even now I had received no letters since we left Tiumen—that is, for six weeks—though I had had the satisfaction of sending many cards and letters. This, also, would have now to stop, or almost so, for a time. So I wrote to my friends that they should not be alarmed if they did not hear from me till I reached the Caspian. Also thinking to reduce my luggage as much as possible, I sent off to Odessa, "by parcels post," two great boxes of curiosities, unitedly weighing 100 Russian pounds, and at a cost of £3 6s., and 2s. more for insurance, to which I may add that they arrived in excellent condition before my advice, and scarcely

scratched, doing nothing worse than frighten my consignee, who wondered what Nihilistic manœuvres might be contained in boxes from such an unexpected quarter, and spoke thereon to the authorities.

Another thing requiring management was my money. I had sent a large proportion of it from Petersburg to the bank in Tashkend by post, and, on calling, found it there; but since I was now starting for a region where robbers abound, it seemed to me a question whether I had not better take as little as was necessary with me, and telegraph for the rest when I reached some place of safety; and seeing that I could not tell, until I arrived at Petro-Alexandrovsk, whether I should cross the Aralo-Caspian desert, or go by the Orenburg route, I promised to telegraph from Krasnovodsk or the Syr-daria whether the balance should be sent to Tiflis or to Orenburg.

It was not quite easy to decide whether or no to take forward the tarantass, for some were very confident (and not without reason, as I afterwards learned) that we should never be able to get it from Bokhara to the Oxus. We were advised, however, by Major Bukoff, whom we met at the club, to get to Khiva if possible on wheels, and I determined accordingly to attempt it. I had no further use, however, for the wagonette, since my Russian books were nearly all disposed of, and those I had remaining in other languages could all be packed in one box. I proceeded accordingly to sell the wagonette, and in so doing met with a piece of unusually generous dealing. Learning at Moscow, in the office of Kamensky Brothers, carriers and transport agents, when I was sending some goods, that they had a branch office at Tashkend, I had asked for an introduction, which in due course I presented, and was asked by the manager what he could do for me. Learning that I wished to dispose of my telega, he inquired the price. The wagonette had cost £5 at Tiumen, where I was told

that by the time we reached Tashkend the vehicle would be worth nearly double, either because they do not make them, or do not make them well, in the south. I was too old a traveller, however, to expect much gain of this sort, but I remembered that the Russian plan is for the buyer to beat down the salesman's price, and so I began by asking £6, when, to my surprise, without having seen the vehicle, my customer said that they did not want it, but that as I had the introduction and to oblige me, he would give that price if I could sell it to no one else. Of course, I did not think it necessary to try, and on the morning we were to leave, the money came by the hand of a messenger, who seemed as pleased to get the carriage as I was to have bargained in such a pleasant way, and to have received such attention on the strength of a mercantile introduction.

It only remained, then, to have the tarantass put in thorough repair, and to lay in stores, and a few articles of warm clothing in prospect of cold in crossing the desert. By the advice of our hotel-keeper, we had a large sheet of felt nailed on the hood of the tarantass, so that if we met with a sandstorm we might cover up the front of the carriage; and then we were ready to depart. We ate our last dinner in Tashkend at the officers' club, where the French manager told us the experience of an English gentleman, who many years before managed to push his way, without permission, as far as the capital, and on the first night after his arrival accompanied this Frenchman to a feast at a circumcision, where von Kaufmann, the Governor-General, was present, and who, seeing the Englishman, ordered him to leave Tashkend within four-and-twenty hours. It was well for me, I thought, that my lot had fallen under a more amiable authority, who was willing that I should go where I pleased, especially in Ferghana, towards which I was now to wend my way from Tashkend to the Syr-daria at Khojend.

CHAPTER XVI.

FROM TASHKEND TO KHOKAND.

Journey from Tashkend.—Steppe vegetation.—An unruly horse.—Fortified post-stations. Approach to Khojend.—Sand barkhans. Arrival at Khokand.—Lodging in summer residence of Tim Bek.—M. Ushakoff our host.—Oriental “politeness.”—Visit to Synagogue.—Information concerning Jews of Khokand and Bokhara.—The bazaar : its jewellery, ewers, and furs.—View from medresse of Murad Bek.—A puppet-show.—Inspection of hospital and Khan’s palace.—The Lepers’ hamlet.—Distribution of Scriptures.—Visit to native merchant.

WE set out for Khojend on Thursday evening, September 21st, a distance of 94 miles. Our journey onward did not equal in despatch our approach to Tashkend. We were kindly supplied with letters, as before, to the post-masters, to expedite our journey, and had intended to start on the morning of Thursday; but not having given notice, there were no horses to be had until evening, at which time there were to be supplied two other travellers, who were proceeding in the same direction, one the *uyezd-nachalnik*, or chief of the district of Khokand, and the other, M. Ushakoff, a judge, whom we had met at the officers’ club, and at the dinner table of the Governor-General, and who had invited us to stay with him during our visit to Khokand. He had been spending a short holiday in Tashkend, and now asked us, as he was returning, to allow him to get first to Khokand, to be in readiness to receive us. Accord-

ingly, he trotted out of Tashkend ahead, we next, and the district chief third ; but at the first station the chief came in close upon our heels, and by some means managed to get his horses changed, and to leave before us. This was against "the rule of the road"; but the yemstchik said that the starosta had told him to let the chief drive out before us. This placed a second traveller in our front, unless, indeed, we could outstrip him. There was little chance of this, however, since he had a mere handful of baggage and a light telega, whilst our poor tarantass was more heavily laden than it had been before. Added to this, when we reached the Kara-Su the floods had risen, making the road so heavy that we could only travel slowly. Pskent and Uralsk we passed in the night, but at the latter station they gave us three such miserable horses that, after going four miles, we stuck in the mire. How long we so remained I have but a hazy idea, for I was safe in the arms of Morpheus, and only learned on waking that we had been obliged to send back to the station for two more horses. Hence, by breakfast time, we had only reached Djan-bulak, the fifth station, to find no horses there.

The aspect of the country had now changed considerably. We had left the oasis behind, and had entered the steppe, the third great division of the surface of the Turkistan country. The steppe, however, is of varied character, and in some parts presents in spring the appearance of a vast flower garden covered with herbage, amongst which Tulips and Anemones alternate agreeably amidst brilliant spots of yellow, white, and scarlet blossoms of other bulbs. This portion of the Kurama district is exceedingly valuable, because the quantity of land irrigated by the Chirchik and Angren is at best but limited, and a large portion of the natives consequently devote themselves to stock-raising, for which, of course, a certain amount of fodder is grown, though it is not customary

here to stable the cattle for the winter, or to provide them with hay. For the winter pasture, therefore, a place must be chosen where the wind is neither too violent, nor the snow too deep.

The journey was too late in autumn to allow of our seeing much beauty in the vegetation of the steppe, but there was a large quantity of fodder stored at Djanbulak, where we arrived in the morning and ordered the samovar from a post-mistress who was smoking, and appeared fully able to speak for herself. The station-rooms were large, and the post-master obliging. He had received no notification of our coming, but when he saw my letter said that if he had he would certainly have kept back the district chief, who, happily for himself, had gone before. At this juncture a wily Tatar, keeper of a caravansary, appeared on the scene, and offered private horses, which I accepted to my cost, inasmuch as his right-wheeler was the only one out of the 800 horses I hired in Central Asia that alarmed me, for when the traces were fastened, he gave such a bound forward as to break clear of everything. We, however, caught and harnessed him again, and trotted over a flat, stony steppe, the road now proceeding for 25 miles in an easterly direction, instead of southerly as heretofore, and having on our left ranges of hills rising in peaks, for the most part bare, rough, and rocky, but here and there showing patches of verdure. Though late in the season for butterflies, we took a few specimens, and passed through what appeared to be a swarm of dragon flies, so numerous that Mr. Sevier caught several by merely holding out the net from the carriage.

On reaching the next station, Murza-rabat, we found it, like the last, to be nothing less than a miniature fortress. It was surrounded with a dry moat and lofty walls, measuring inside 60 paces square. There was a well in the centre of the yard, and against the wall stables and buildings, some of which struck me at first

as intended for an *étape* prison. Outside by the road was a grave, with a monument raised by travellers' gifts to the memory of the starosta Jacobleff and his yemstchiks, who on the 18th of August, 1875, had defended the post-house against a band of Khokandians, and had been killed by them. It was subsequently to this event the fortress had been erected.

Our road now turned again to the south over a depression in a mountain chain, which gave us the Kurama-Tau on our left, and the snow-capped elevations of the Mogol-Tau on the right. Eagles were flying about, and larks and wagtails, all of which we had time to admire, for, as the road continued to ascend, the carriage proceeded so slowly that it was pleasanter to walk ahead and enjoy the scenery; and when at last, towards 3 o'clock, we reached the crest of the hills, and looked down upon the ancient Jaxartes, and Khojend nestling among the trees, the view was one of the prettiest we had seen in Russian Central Asia. The town with its old earthen forts looked well by the river side, as did the Russian church and wooden bridge.

It was pleasant, on arriving at Khojend, to find that our coming was expected by the Nachalnik, who immediately gave orders for dinner. Whilst waiting I felt unusually tired and sleepy, though I know not why, for we had been travelling only 40 hours, which was nothing in comparison with the nights upon nights spent in the tarantass north of Tashkend; but I suppose my training had been somewhat demoralized by sleeping in a bed, and the comparative comforts we had enjoyed at the capital. Dinner over, the Colonel gave us a basket of splendid fruit, and then, preceded by two djiguitts, mounted his horse to see us off. Thus escorted through the bazaar the natives were all politeness and attention, each rising, some bowing, and others dismounting; and so it continued till we had reached the outskirts of the town, when the Colonel bade us adieu, and asked us to call in

returning. We pursued our way past the village of Ipsar, 840 feet above the sea, and in the evening reached Kostakoz, where we could have no horses, we were told, until 11 o'clock. Whether this was unavoidable I am not sure, but the Colonel had told us beforehand that this post-master had received notice to quit, and so was not in an amiable mood. On this account, I suppose, a djiguitt had accompanied us, but even he asked without success for horses.

Towards midnight we started for the remainder of our little journey to Khokand, and midway to the next station crossed the boundary into Ferghana. By daylight we had passed Kara-chukum, and once more approached the Syr-daria, on the bank of which is situated the Khokandian frontier fortress of Makhram, a large square building for 500 Khokandians, with high crenelated mud walls, and protected on three sides by a deep moat.

We were now about 1,300 feet above the sea, and in the distance had mountains before us in every direction. Immediately in front, however, was a prospect not so pleasing, for we had to cross a stony waste of reddish sand for 20 miles, on which there was little vegetation but camels' food. As we returned, our driver informed us that he had already driven the journey and back with his horses once, so that when he reached home with our steeds, he would have had that day 75 miles of desert travel. At Patar we found a good station, and reached an oasis with vegetation. Beyond this the country was interspersed by desert patches of shifting sand, which encroaches like a flood, destroying houses and cultivated fields, and so driving away the population. The road from Patar was frightful. Here we saw dozens of sand-heaps, or *barkhans*, which, by reason of the unilateral direction of the wind, take the form of a horse-shoe. These were the first we had met with on so considerable a scale, and they presented a curious appearance, the surface being sometimes rippled

as on the seashore. Some rose at an angle of 45° to the ridge, here and there perhaps 100 feet high, but always descending abruptly on the interior. One had only to think of the Gharm-sol wind to easily understand why the district in ancient times was called "*Ha-Dervish*," from the fact, related by Baber, of two dervishes having lost themselves in this desert and perished, calling out "*Ha-Dervish! Ha-Dervish!*" This wind blows frequently at the town of Khokand. The sun at such times appears like a large dull disc, without brightness. The dimness is produced from the air being laden with fine dust, which penetrates everywhere and covers everything. Fortunately for us, when we passed, the air was calm and the sand at rest.

The post-station at Bish-aryk stands a little to the west of the village, where there is a bazaar; and before reaching the next station, Chuchai, the aspect of the country had entirely changed. The roads, too, improved greatly, verst-posts appeared, and sundry objects met the eye, testifying to the good government of General Abramoff. On either side of the way are rows of trees, land well cultivated, and to the right and left houses surrounded by gardens.

As we approached the town we saw men engaged in building houses, which are everywhere made of earth. As we came near the town walls, their cracked condition showed them to be of similar material; and as we passed in at the city gate I noticed a platform on either side, which would serve alike for a guard-room, a toll-house, or perchance a place of judgment or council. M. Nicolai Nicolaivitch Ushakoff, our intended host, had promised to send to the gate a djiguitt, or policeman, to await our coming; and when we arrived about noon, the man was there in flowing robes and white turban, ready to mount his horse and precede us. I was thankful that he did so, for otherwise it would not have been easy to find the way.

Khokand, being only about a century and a half

old, is said to have better streets than some of the older towns of Central Asia. In most they are irregular and narrow, only the main streets being sufficiently wide to allow of the passage of a native cart. The shops, tea taverns, and barbers' rooms are usually situated along both sides of the main street, leading from the principal gate to the centre of the town, and on to the market-place, commonly called the Rhigistan. In the present instance, however, we had to make our way through bye-streets, with blank walls on either hand, and with just room enough for our vehicle. There was so little to distinguish one street from another, that we seemed to be threading a perfect maze, until at last we entered a garden and grounds surrounding a house that had been used occasionally by the late Khudaiar Khan, but was properly the summer residence of Seid Nasir Timbek, his eldest son. It was of native build, and the prettiest of its kind I saw in Asia. There was a central hall, perhaps 40 feet by 20, with chambers all round, screened off by blinds. Comparing the building for a moment to an English church, it was lighted from the clerestory through open woodwork, unglazed, there being no glass used in the town before the advent of the Russians, except in the Khan's palace. The room that would represent the chancel was to be my sleeping place; at the opposite end, on either side of the organ gallery, had been the women's apartments; in the south aisle was our host's sleeping place; and in the nave we were to write, eat, and spend our time by day, the place presenting a curious mixture of Asiatic baldness and European comfort. The building had been forfeited, I presume, to the conquerors, and granted to M. Ushakoff for a summer residence, though he preferred to live in the town during winter.

Our host, being a judicial functionary, had command of several djiguitts, of whom a number always accompanied him in the streets, and I soon saw that to have

them was no mere question of parade, but that they were of real service in clearing the way. It being Saturday afternoon, I asked to be taken to the meeting place of the Jews. M. Ushakoff and the *Nachalnik gorod* accompanied us in open carriages, and as one native after another arose from his squatting position and respectfully stood erect, or stroked his beard, or as another dismounted from horse or camel, my cicerone drew attention to what he called Asiatic politeness. But it had struck me in another way. The subservience of the Khokandians excelled all I met in Central Asia; and when I remembered that Khokand had come but recently under the sway of the Russians, and that only after two or three sound thrashings, it occurred to me that this seeming politeness might be inspired by fear.* Dr. Schuyler, at all events, experienced no such politeness from the Kkokandians when they were independent, nor did we from the natives in the town of Bokhara.

On arriving at the small square white-washed room that served for a synagogue, we found it full of worshipping Jews wearing Sart skull caps, and the *טלית* (*talith*), or scarf thrown across the shoulders during prayer; and if they had not what we should call "fringes" on their garments, they at least wore on "the borders a riband of blue,"† with fringe attached. They wore also phylacteries, or certain verses from the law, in a little box, as "a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes" (Exod. xiii. 9); and I observed certain cases where the extra large size of these *tephillin*, as they term them, recalled the words, "They make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments" (Matt. xxiii. 5). They were all reading aloud, and led by a precentor, and my attention was called at

* I could not help thinking of the promise to the Israelites: "This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee among the nations" (Deut. xi. 25), for no Khokandian seemed to dare to "move his tongue against any of the" Russians (Josh. x. 21).

† Numb. xv. 38.

a portion of the service to the prayer for the Russian Emperor.* My letter of commendation obtained for me a speedy welcome, and I began to inquire for ancient manuscripts, but they had none, their quite modern copy of the law having been written in Bokhara at a cost of £15. I gave them a copy of the Old Testament and of the New, both in Hebrew, and in return a man presented me with a ring, which he appeared to wear as a talisman.† In a second place of assembly close by, we found women present, parted off from the men, but not veiled. My further inquiry for old manuscripts elicited the statement that there was a *genizah*, or place of sepulture, in Samarkand, where many Hebrew books are buried, though subsequently I could hear nothing about them there. Whilst speaking to a Jew from Bokhara, and asking whether they remembered Dr. Wolff coming there, he gave me the interesting reply that his father saved the life of "*Yusuf Woolff*," who appeared at Bokhara "the first time as a Jew, but later as an ambassador."

Subsequently an intelligent Jew came to our house to buy copies of the Old Testament, cunningly adding, "They do not buy the New Testament here," though he had, he said, begun reading the one I gave him. I took the opportunity to ask him about the Jews in Central Asia, who, he said, were descended from Judah and Benjamin, the two tribes dispersed over Europe and Asia, whereas the ten tribes, he thought, were dwelling "beyond China."‡ In Khokand he informed us there were from 200 to 300

* Thus showing that they were not forgetful of the counsel of the prophet Jeremiah (xxix. 7): "Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace."

† On it is written, אֱלֹהֵא ד"ר מַאִיר עֲנֵי ב"ר מַרְי, which gives the name of the priest from whom the ring came, thus (literally), "God of Rabbi Mayer, answer me in Thy mercy, O Lord."

‡ He thus testified from an independent source to certain migrations of Jews to China, on which Mr. Finn has thrown considerable light, and to which I shall allude hereafter.

Jewish residents, and from 300 to 400 sojourners, mostly merchants, dyers, manufacturers, and druggists. I expressed surprise that they had no regular synagogue, but he explained that until the advent of the Russians the Jews had been fewer in number, that they had no right to buy land, and were forbidden by the Khan to build a synagogue; that they were, in fact, under similar restrictions to those from which their brethren in Bokhara still suffered. They could not enter the city mounted, were forbidden to wear a turban, and allowed only a black calico cap for the head, and a piece of string for a girdle; and though they were compelled to pay double taxes, as compared with the Sarts, yet if a Jew were insulted, or even beaten, by a Muhammadan, he could claim no redress, and, moreover, that during the later years of the Khanate, four or five Jews had been compelled to become Mussulmans. I asked whether I could do anything for the welfare of him and his brethren, whereupon he said that under the Russians the Jews were free, and had no need of help, but that they were oppressed in Bokhara, the 15,000 Jews in that city being allowed to have only one synagogue. I inquired for a certain Jew to whom I had an introduction, and learned that he was at Samarkand. A letter also was given me to a Jew in that place, from one in Khokand, and at first a letter of introduction was promised to one in Bokhara, but the promise was afterwards withdrawn, through fear lest the name of the giver should come to the ears of the Emir, and punishment thereby ensue!

From the synagogue we went to the bazaar, which Dr. Schuyler and M. Ujfalvy agree in praising as the best in Central Asia, but which I did not see to advantage, because it was not one of the bi-weekly market days, Thursday or Sunday. The streets are roofed over like a succession of lofty arcades, affording air, and shelter from the sun. One meets there with all the pro-

ducts of Central Asia : silk and velvet from Bokhara ; silks, stuffs, and camlets from Marghilan ; hand-worked copper goods made at Karshi and in Khokand itself, where the coppersmiths are very skilful ; leather trunks from Bokhara ; Dungan hats from Western China ; *tibéteikas*, or skull caps, of various patterns ; *khalats*, or robes of startling colours, in satin and silk ; Samarkand knives, jewellery, and objects cut in jade and onyx. The jewellers of Khokand make numerous earrings, ornamented with imitation stones. The bracelets of massive silver are open, like those of the Middle Ages, and their gold collarettes and silver seals rival those of Samarkand. The ancient jewellery is more remarkable, the forms are more original, and the stones sometimes real, thus pointing to an era when goldsmiths flourished in Central Asia.

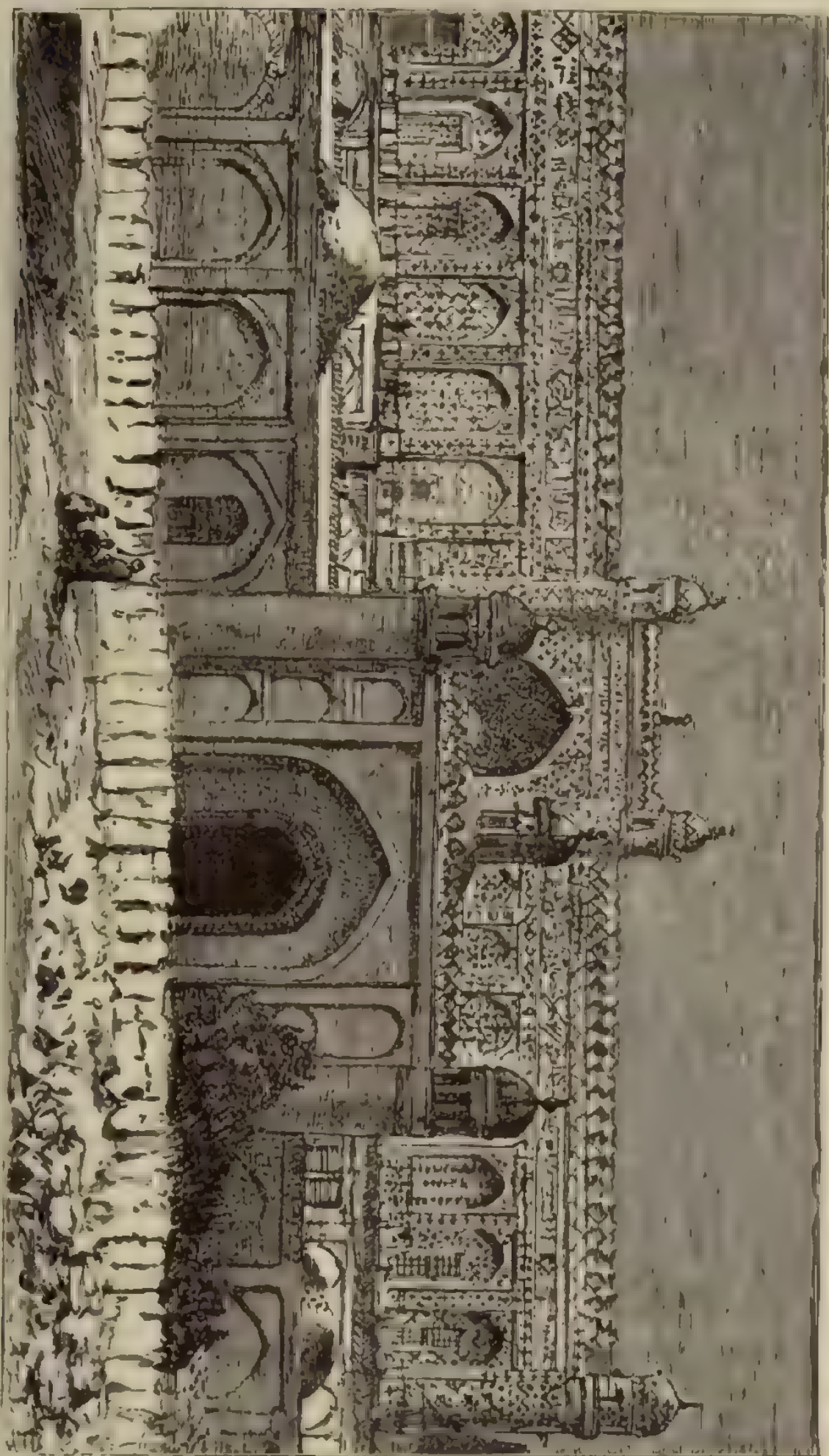
I was struck with the brass ewers, for the manufacture of which Khokand is famous. They are made of graceful form, and tastefully chiselled, the ancient specimens often being beautifully enamelled. I secured a handsome one for the British Museum, and had another, still handsomer, presented to me in Khiva. I bought, likewise, a teapot of similar workmanship, and specimens of native finger- and ear-rings, buckles, bracelets, and charms. Among other articles of trade brought to Khokand from the surrounding mountains are various kinds of furs, the prices of which vary from 2s. for a black cat, or a black sheepskin, to 40s. for a black lambskin, and 50s. for that of a tiger. Before the annexation of the Khanate, opinions differed widely as to its wealth and the extent of its commerce. Whether trade has increased since the annexation of the Khanate in 1876 I know not, but one merchant, however, told me that the carrying firm he was connected with did business, in the time of the Khan, to the value of £2,000 a year, but that it had now fallen to one-fourth of that amount.

From the bazaar we made our way to the brick

medresse of Sultan Murad Bek, looked into some of the students' rooms, and then mounted the minaret to get a view of the town, the general appearance of which, as with other inhabited places in Central Asia, is decidedly unattractive, for patches of green are its sole adornment. Nevertheless the natives call it "Khokand-i-Latif," or "charming Khokand," which title must refer, I suppose, to the surrounding snow mountains that we could see in more than one direction. Anciently the place was environed by marshes and frequented by wild boars, whence the town is supposed to derive its name "Khok-kand," or "town of pigs." Doves were flying above the uninviting mud roofs, and in the distance were the city walls, said to be 12 miles in circumference, enclosing a population of 60,000 souls. It was not easy to distinguish particular buildings, but they have in Khokand a manufactory that supplies many of the Central Asian towns with writing-paper, suitable for the gummy ink used by the natives, but the Russians import their paper from Europe. Whilst we were looking from the minaret the sun went down, whereupon we saw some of the students go to evening prayer, and we started homewards, to be joined at dinner by Major Vladimir Alexandrovich Tolmatcheff, in command of the Cossacks, a young man for a major, but who had distinguished himself, if I remember rightly, in the province under Skobelev, and who, now that fighting was over, seemed to find things exceedingly dull. After dinner, M. Ushakoff had prepared us an evening's amusement with native marionettes. A puppet-show was put up in his room, in front of which two men played tambourines. The late Khan and his courtiers were placed on the stage, and for their amusement miniature dancing boys and girls were made to play their part before them. Next the Emir of Afghanistan was introduced as having 40,000 soldiers, and the Khan of Khokand 30,000, and then some-

thing like a battle was enacted, on which the Russians stepped in, and put both parties to flight, the affair concluding by firing miniature cannons.

I needed no rocking to sleep that night, and on the following morning was taken to call on General Iphimovitch, who was for the time being acting as Governor of the province in the room of General Abramoff. We found his Excellency with his staff under silk tents in a garden, where we were offered fruit. Then we followed the General in making an official tour of inspection, first to the barracks and next to the military hospital. The latter was an airy building, said to have been erected by the late Khan for an asylum, but never finished, and since adapted to its present use by the Russians. We next went to the prison, where, in taking notes, my stylographic pen—the first seen in the town—puzzled the bystanders to know where the ink came from. There was nothing remarkable in any of the buildings thus far visited, but we next entered a place of greater interest—namely, the palace of the late Khan of Khokand. I had seen many, if not most, of the regal and imperial palaces of Europe, but never before the dwelling of an Asiatic potentate, and this one called for the more attention because in architectural pretensions it outdoes any other modern native building in Central Asia. The *urda*, or, as it is called in Bokhara, the “*ark*,” which, like *kremlin*, means “the citadel,” is situated in the centre of the town, in an open space large enough for the Russian troops to exercise in. It is a huge rectangular construction, enclosing several courts and buildings, and surrounded with moat and high walls. A portion of these latter was blown up with dynamite, by order of Skobelev, at the taking of the town, to the great astonishment and stupefaction of the natives, by whom the like was never seen before. The palace which is within this citadel, has towers at the corners



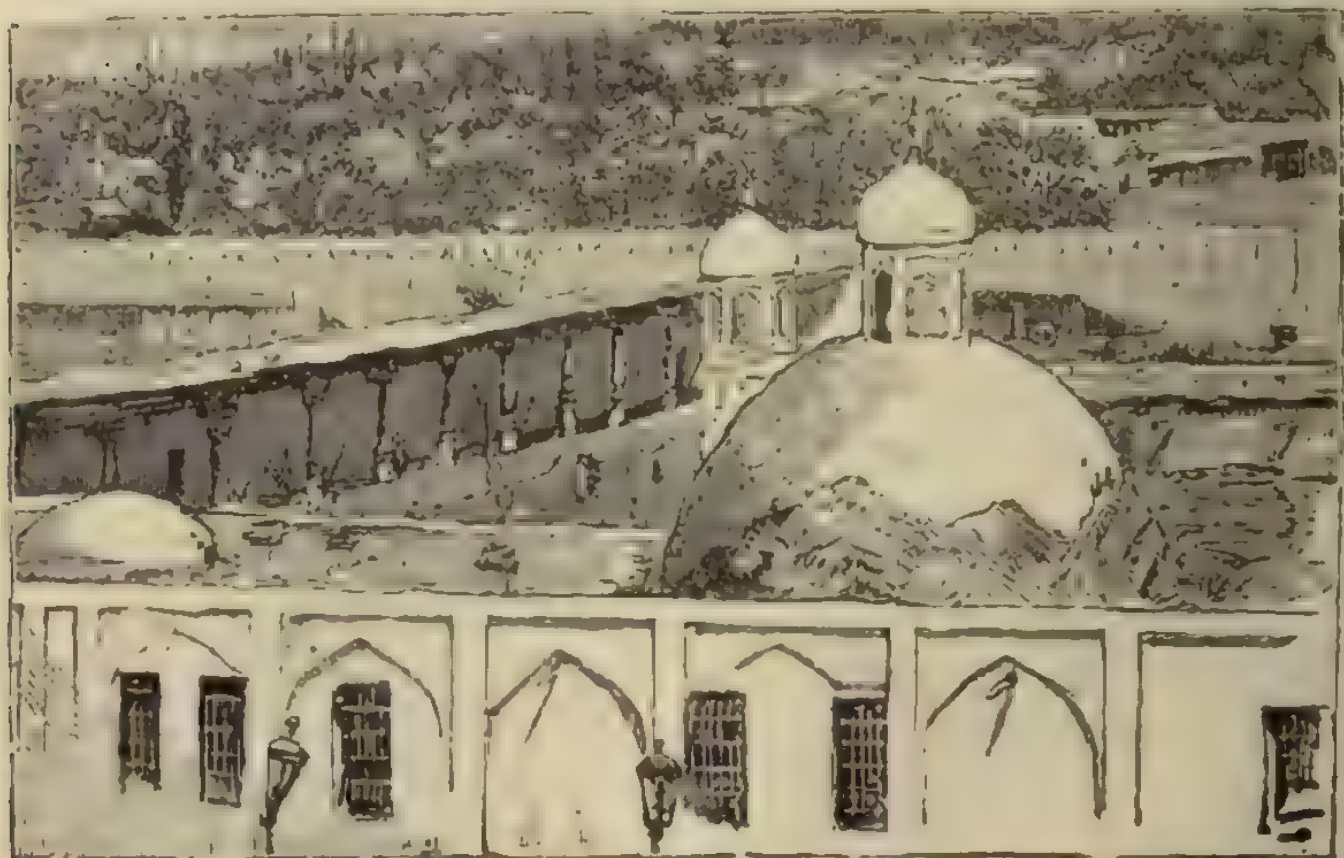
THE PALACE OF THE LATE KHAN AT KHOKAND.

the whole front being faced with glazed tiles, white, green, and blue, with a large inscription running along the cornice, "Built by Seid Muhammad Khudaiar Khan in the year 1287" (1870). We approached the entrance up a corduroy slope, and found at the palace gates two copper cannons, of native manufacture, bearing silver inscriptions, but not rifled, and with bores hardly smooth. The gates of the building were of finely-carved wood. On entering, we found the courts very spacious, and surrounded by open galleries, the supporting columns being of wood, with graceful capitals. The painting on the friezes and ceilings was extremely fine and varied, and was perhaps the most artistic feature of the palace, for the enamelled bricks did not bear close inspection, and were not equal to those of mediæval make such as we afterwards saw in Samarkand.

The Khan's throne room, where ambassadors used to be received, now serves for a Russian chapel, the walls being highly painted and the window-shutters carved. The room in which the Russian commandant was living was filled with European curiosities at the time of taking the town, and among them were models of a railway-engine and a steam-boat. Another room, in which Khudaiar used in the morning to receive his ministers, had a floor of beaten earth, with carved alabaster let into the walls. This chamber the Russians had appropriated for a school-room for 45 scholars, of whom 13 were Russians, 23 Jews, and 9 Sarts. But the chamber upon which more ornamentation had been bestowed than any other was the Khan's cabinet, painted and gilded in Moorish style. The Russian officers thought the ornamentation could not have cost less than £500; but, though somewhat similar in style, it did not equal in beauty the finished Alhambra court in the Crystal Palace. The splendour was decidedly "barbaric," and from the room was an exit to a gallery, over-

looking a courtyard, from which the Khan was wont to give his orders, and, I think we were told, to see his criminals put to death. The part of the palace which was used for a prison in the Khan's time is, I believe, no longer used for that purpose.

In this courtyard trials were formerly conducted, and through it we passed to the women's quarter of the palace. They had, set apart for their use, a summer pavilion in the centre of a court, of which the domes were of variegated colours, no two being alike; and



THE PRISON IN THE PALACE OF THE LATE KHAN AT KHOKAND.

we mounted by sloping boards to an upper story to enter their empty winter apartments, whence we could see the vine groves of the palace gardens.

From the palace I was taken to see some fellow-subjects in the persons of a few Hindus, as well as their tiny place of worship; and after that, at my special desire, though apparently to my host's surprise, we went to the most miserable place in Khokand—the lepers' village, outside the town.

This frightful disease, of which the two kinds are distinguished as *makhan* and *pis*, is said to be con-

tagious, and those who are suffering from it are condemned (as under the Levitical law, Numb. x. 2, Lev. xiii. 46) to live in hamlets apart, communication with them, according to Kostenko, being strictly forbidden. No objection, however, was raised to my visiting the *makhau* or lepers' hamlet, and I learned that some of the lepers resorted to the bazaar, to support themselves and their afflicted fellows by asking alms.*

On arriving we found their state was pitiable indeed. Sixteen men and six women were living in mud huts, in the depths of poverty, with no doctor coming near. My companion, Mr. Sevier, being a physician, was, of course, particularly interested in our visit. The first case we looked at was that of a boy with leprosy in the atrophic stage, with his face a mass of sores, and his eyes eaten out, and a more revolting sight I think I never saw. The poor boy's chief care seemed to be to keep off the flies. He was born of leprous parents, who had brought him thither and abandoned him. In a second case the eyes of the sufferer protruded, and in a third the knuckles were cramped. A woman, whom we saw, had a discoloured face, and in a young girl the disease was seen in the skin being tightly stretched over the nose, whilst, lastly, a man seized eight months previously in his hands, saw them gradually growing like claws from contraction of the skin. This was one of the saddest visits I paid in

* Dr. Haughton, of Dublin, has visited the leper hospitals at Bergen to study leprosy, and he tells me that the popular opinion is that the disease is contagious; the scientific opinion—that it is hereditary. With this latter he concurs, especially after consulting Demerara physicians having great experience of leprosy in the West Indies and South America, where it is more deadly than in Europe or Asia. Dr. Haughton speaks of "two houses for incurables and one for curables" at Bergen, in 1864; but when I was there in 1876, I wrote: "250 patients—all incurable"; for in no case had they then been successful. They did indeed point out one boy of seven, who entered with a tiny spot of leprosy, and who they thought in 20 years *might* be cured. So far as I am able to judge, I should think that the care bestowed upon the Bergen lepers kept them longer alive, so that in the hospital were seen examples of the disease in more advanced stages than I happened to meet with in Asia; but there were certain resemblances in both.

Turkistan, and it is much to be hoped that some benevolent Russians ere this may have attempted something for the mitigation of the sufferings, even if it be impossible to effect the cure, of Turkistan lepers. On account of their isolation, the stricken folk are deprived of nearly all civil advantages; they live for the most part on alms, marry only among themselves, and bring into the world children who soon become lepers like themselves. As soon as the news reaches the *makhau* of another stricken person, a deputation immediately proceeds to demand that the afflicted one should be sent to the marked hamlet. Hither poor persons are forcibly exiled, but the rich sometimes buy themselves off by a yearly payment of from £5 to £10. Even this, however, would not seem always to be feasible, for one stricken man at Khokand told me, as a proof of his former prosperity, that he had three wives, but when taken sick he was driven away from home to his present position with one wife and child.

Having done what little I could for the lepers, we paid a second visit to the medresse. I had been distributing Russian tracts and other reading material in the barracks, hospital, and elsewhere, but unfortunately I had none in the languages of the natives, except a few ponderous Persian Bibles and Arabic New Testaments. I was anxious to give one of each for the use of the students, though M. Ushakoff, as he afterwards told me, was not without some little fear as to how such an offer would be received. I asked, however, for the principal mullah, and placed the Bible in his hand, telling him that it was the best book we had in England, and that I begged his acceptance thereof as a memorial of my visit. He bowed, received it with great satisfaction, and soon showed that he could read it, whereupon I desired him to let it be read by all the students.

We then went home, thinking to spend a quiet evening; but, having a letter of introduction to a native

merchant, I did not like to omit the friendly mission, and proposed accordingly to call. My host, however, decided that it would be more in keeping with their custom with the natives to send for the merchant to come to me, and this he did. When the man discovered that I had brought an introduction all the way from Moscow, he entreated that, though late, we would honour him with a visit. Accordingly, Sevier and I were conducted to his house, which I was glad to see as a specimen of a native interior. We had been introduced at Tashkend, as I have said, to a rich Jew, the reception-room in whose house closely resembled that of the merchant at Khokand. We saw, too, at Tashkend something of the women of the house. They were dressed in Sart fashion, but were not veiled. We were not introduced to them, though they did not appear to think our presence strange, and they were evidently not kept in seclusion. In the merchant's house at Khokand we saw not a shadow of a female, but were shown into a room carpeted, indeed, but without what we should call furniture. In due time was brought in a small, low, round table with refreshments, near which our host squatted on the ground, whilst we were provided with chairs so high that we had to stoop to help ourselves from the festive board.

On returning to M. Ushakoff, he showed us some coats of mail that were in use by the natives when the town was taken. After this we walked in the garden. It was a beautiful night at the end of September, but not at all cold, and I wished that I could have stayed longer in the province.

But my heart was set upon seeing Bokhara, and, if possible, floating on the Oxus to Khiva. Remembering, therefore, that the season was advancing, I determined to leave on the morrow for Samarkand.

CHAPTER XVII.

FROM KHOKAND TO SAMARKAND.

Locality of Khokand productive of goitre.—Departure from Khokand.—Travellers sleeping in the street.—Return to Khojend.—Climate of Khojend.—Long stage to Ura-Tiube.—View of the town.—Its sacred places.—Religious and moral condition of inhabitants.—The “Gates of Tamerlane.”—The Sart pastime of Kōk-bari.—Fording the Zarafshan.—Approaching Samarkand.

KHOKAND, though called “the charming,” was voted by the few Russian officials we found living there as exceedingly dull. Moreover, though the situation of the city is pleasant, and on three rivers, yet the water is naught, or, worse still, is supposed to be a principal cause of goitre.

On the Russian occupation of the town, goitre began to appear among their troops, which led them to study the local causes producing the disease; and since the town engendered other diseases also, especially fevers, it was decided to transfer the administration and the major portion of the troops to Marghilan, which has now become the Russian capital.

There was no necessity for me to go there, since I had seen the Governor, General Abramoff, at Tashkend, and had given him books for the supply of the hospitals and prisons of Ferghana; so I accordingly prepared on Monday morning, September 25th, after a pleasant stay with our gentlemanly host, to drive 260 miles to Samarkand. Our belongings were

soon packed, the weightier now by reason of a Khokandian suit of mail that had been presented me, and which, with the native boots from Kashgar, the chamber or leather trousers from Tashkend, and a helmet of mail and battle-axe subsequently procured at



THE AUTHOR IN A KHOKANDIAN SUIT OF MAIL.

Bokhara, form a striking suit for a member of the Church Militant. Leaving M. Ushakoff at 10 o'clock on a fine morning, a djiguitt piloted our carriage through the labyrinth of streets to the city boundary, beyond which we continued through the walled gardens

of the suburbs, with snow mountains on the distant horizon. At Bish-Aryk they seemed to have received no notice of our coming, but we obtained horses, and by eight in the evening arrived at Kara-Chukum. Here we had to wait three hours for steeds, which gave us opportunity to walk through the village, and to see people arranging themselves to sleep in the street,* some under a platform of the tiny bazaar, and some on couches, whilst others, apparently travellers, simply spread a garment or cloth and lay on the ground. One man, a late worker, was winding cotton by hand for making stockings, but many more were busy with a large saucepan preparing supper.

We left about midnight, and early in the morning reached Khojend. This was by far the oldest Central Asian city we had seen, and dates at least as far back as the fourth century before the Christian era. It was called the Alexandria of the north, and perhaps marks the farthest point northward of Alexander's conquests. Since his days the town has changed masters many times. Chinese, Arabs, Persians, Mongols, and Turks have each poured out their blood in assaulting or defending it.

Khojend is bounded on two sides by the River Syr, and on three sides by gardens and ploughed fields. On the south-west these stretch for nearly 5 miles, and on the east still further. The walls, double on three sides and single near the Syr, form an irregular polygon, with a circumference of about 8 miles, the town being entered by 8 gates and several small exits.

Our host the Nachalnik complained of the intensity of the summer heat at Khojend. For June, July, and August the average temperature is about 84°, and the dust brought by the wind from the Steppe

* Illustrating the naturalness of the expression of the two angels who said to Lot, "Nay, but we will abide in the street all night" (Gen. xix. 2); also the primitive state of things with Job, who could say, "The stranger did not lodge in the street, but I opened my doors to the traveller" (Job xxxi. 32).

fills the air, and renders it very oppressive. The winter is milder than at Tashkend, the Syr here being hardly ever frozen. The wall of the Mogol-Tau, 4,000 feet high, on the opposite side of the river, helps to intensify the heat, sheltering the town from the north wind, and absorbing and refracting the sun's rays. Summer, too, is longer than at Tashkend, and Khojend fruits are ripe a fortnight before those of Tashkend.

When we passed through the bazaar it was early in the morning, so we thought it better not to call on the Nachalnik, but ask for horses to proceed immediately. We had now made 83 miles from Khojend, and had before us 181 miles more, with 11 stations to Samarkand. From Nau, where was a mud fortress, we sent back a message of thanks to Colonel Putimsoff for kindly arranging about our horses, and then breakfasted, by way of fortifying ourselves for the longest postal stage I think I ever took in Russia without changing horses. It is marked in the post-book 27 miles, but the driver declared it was 33. I believed him, and hired four horses, and they gave us another into the bargain, so that we drove off with two leaders under a postilion, and a troika. For about twenty miles the landscape presented nothing but an extensive lifeless desert, with scarcely a tree. Then appeared an oasis here and there, and cultivation came into view with fields of standing corn. During all the stage we met but one yemstchik, and few caravans, but saw a man ploughing with oxen. This dreary drive took us the greater part of the day, and we were not sorry, late in the afternoon, to come within sight of the picturesque fortress of Ura-Tiube.

Ura-Tiube, or Ora-Tippa, is a city set on a hill 2,700 feet above the sea. The commandant was Colonel Vaulin. With much ado we got them to drag the carriage up to his house, where he was expecting us, and received us heartily. He quickly gave us some

dinner, and seemed thoroughly to participate in our enjoyment, for so dull was the place, there being only five persons in it to constitute "society," that he was as pleased with our visit as we were. The view from the terrace before the Colonel's house was one of the most extensive we saw in Central Asia. The house is situated at the foot of two eminences, one being surmounted by the citadel, whilst on the slopes of the other lies the north-western portion of the town. On our right was the citadel, with a monument raised to the memory of the Russians killed in the siege on the 1st November, 1866. The gateway of the fort had been turned into a small Russian church. On our left we had a good view of the barracks and the town, which has a circumference of about four miles and is encircled by a double wall.

I inquired at Ura-Tiube about the religious and moral condition of the people, and was told of two adjacent places sacred in Muhammadan eyes, with traditions attached worthy of Papal Rome. One, about half a mile out of the town, was the tomb of a saint, over which was built an arch that in process of time began to drop in the centre, whereupon, with a view to propping it up, they cut no less than 100 trees in succession, not one of which, by some strange fatality, would exactly fit; whereupon the hewers of wood decided to go to sleep, and lo! whilst they slept, the hundred trees walked off to Mecca, whence Muhammad sent back a stone pillar, and this the sleepers, on waking, found erected where the tree was to have stood. Another saint having been buried in Ura-Tiube, water began to issue from his grave. At once the inhabitants surrounded the place with a wall, and it is now considered holy. The moral condition of the native men was said to be exceedingly low, and all sorts of disgusting crime common.

Colonel Vaulin would gladly have had us prolong our stay, but it seemed better to press on, and just

as it became dark we started forward. The road was good, and, as we travelled slowly, I managed to sleep through the five hours we drove to Savat, where, understanding that the next stage would be a heavy one, we again hired four horses, and were given five. We thus sped on during the night to Zamin, where once there was a mud fort, and to Ravat, and by breakfast-time had descended to Jizakh, a town 970 feet above the sea, with 4,000 inhabitants. Thus far from Ura-Tiube we had been skirting the base of the Turkistan range of mountains, along a route with hills adjacent. The road frequently crossed the little stream that waters Jizakh, sometimes keeping along its high loamy banks, but at others climbing the hill-side. On one of these latter occasions I remember noticing a specimen of semi-nomad life, in tents pitched near plots of cultivated land, and specimens of rude weaving laid along the ground.

We passed two villages lying under the hill-side, with flat roofs and walled yards, and then entered a valley of the Kara-Tau chain, through which runs the stream Jizakh just referred to, whilst the road leads through a defile not more than a hundred yards in width, called the Gates of Tamerlane, though there appears to be no local reason for the name. This important pass connects the Syr-daria and Zarafshan valleys, and has witnessed many a sanguinary conflict. On our right rose the scarped cliff some 400 feet high, of a pyramidal slaty rock. On its surface are cut two Persian inscriptions. The first commemorates a campaign to, and the return in safety from, the country of the Mongols in 1425, by Ulug-Bek, the celebrated grandson of Tamerlane; and the second informs the traveller of a victory in 1571 of Abdullah Khan, who with 30,000 men put to flight an army of 400,000. This victory is attributed "to a fortunate conjunction of the stars," and it is added that so many were killed that for a month blood continued to run

in the river to Jizakh, and then it concludes, "Let this be known." This was an instance of setting up a memorial for those who should come after, as was also the raising a heap for a similar purpose amongst the nomad Kirghese I had met, and to which I have alluded; but I do not remember meeting in Central Asia any exemplification of the custom of setting up great stones, plastering them with plaster, and writing thereon.*

On emerging from the defile we were again on the steppe, with signs of irrigation, and distant snow-covered peaks to the south. As we approached Yany-Kurgan, we saw what looked in the distance like a company of Cossacks exercising, but on nearer approach proved to be a hundred or more of natives playing their favourite game of *Kök-Bari*, or grey wolf. It was market day, and on such occasions, when horsemen congregate, a goat or kid is good-naturedly seized upon, belonging to someone well-to-do, who has had a birth in his family or some other piece of good fortune, and the animal is killed. The president of the game then takes up his position, if possible, near some steep or elevated place, and hands the goat to a horseman, who dashes down the slope at the risk of breaking his neck, and is immediately pursued by the field, each of whom tries to snatch away the goat before the man can bring it back to the president. Men of various ages were on the ground, and some had mounted their boys before them to see the fun, which was in some respects not unlike a game of polo. The race goes on till the carcase is torn in pieces, whereupon it "goes to pot," and is boiled for a feast. Then the company is ready to seize another goat and begin again.

We passed but few houses on the road to Sarailyk, and then proceeded across extensive plains, frequently through cultivation. By evening we reached Kamenny-

* Deut. xxvii. 2.

Most, or Stone Bridge, guarded by a Russian fort, and beyond this point descended into the lower valley of the Zarafshan, the road lying through numerous fields.

We had telegraphed in the morning from Jizakh to Samarkand to General Korolkoff to inform him of our approach, hoping to finish our journey that night ; but when we reached Djimbai it was already dark, and since between that station and Samarkand we had to ford the Zarafshan, the post-master advised us to wait till dawn, and not risk the danger of a night crossing. I therefore sat up till midnight writing, so as to have as much leisure as possible in the capital, and before it was light I stirred up the yemstchik to put to the horses. We started about four o'clock, and in the grey dawn came to the banks of the "gold-strewing" stream, the fording of which I saw was to be a more serious matter than aught of the kind I had previously undertaken. Not only is the stream very swift, but the depth so varies from day to day in different parts of the bed that men are kept on the spot to study the river's caprice and help travellers across. Our goods were all taken out of the tarantass, and, with our two selves, were placed in a high native cart, and thus, accompanied by horsemen, we forded the river with no worse mishap than the falling out of our bread-bag, which was rescued by one of the horsemen. The tarantass was dragged through, and did not get so soaked as we feared it might have done, so that we had only to put back our goods and proceed. We passed the hill of Chupan-Ata, and soon found ourselves on a well-made road, with trees on either hand. Along this we passed to the palace of the Governor, and thus arrived at the ancient capital of the Timurids.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ANCIENT CAPITAL OF TAMERLANE.

Tamerlane's capital.—Ancient ruins.—The Russian Governor's palace.—The Gur-Emir: its tombstones, history, and relics.—Mosque of Shah-Zindeh: its legends, ornamentation, and places of devotion.—Ruin of Bibi-Khanum medresse: its architecture, and miracle-working lectern.—Bibi-Khanum's tomb.—The Citadel Palace and the *Kök-tash* stone.—Timur's palace of Ishrat-Khana.—Bird's-eye view of Samarkand.—Its former and present dimensions.—Khoja-Akhrar medresse.—Koran of Othman.—Tradition of Tamerlane's library.—The Rhigistan, with medresses of Ulug-Beg, Shir-Dar, and Tillah-Kari.—Varieties of enamelled bricks.—A butcher's shrine.

WE saw little or nothing of antiquarian interest north of Tashkend, unless it were a few Kirghese tombs, not apparently very old. Nor did matters improve much until we approached Samarkand on the 28th September, and sighted, from the Tashkend road, the enamelled dome of Timur's tomb, as prominent an object in miniature as the dome of St. Paul's from London Bridge. The road ran through an ancient cemetery, and continued past the Place of Bibi-Khanum, and the bazaar, to the Rhigistan, or market-place, bounded on three sides by the medresses Ulug Beg, Shir-Dar, and Tillah-Kari. Instead of following this road, however, our driver turned to the right on passing inside the wall, and drove down an avenue, planted by the Russians, on the eastern side of the citadel, and so brought us to the grove of trees, where is situated the palace of the

Governor. General Ivanoff, as I have intimated, was at Tashkend, but the soldiers in charge of his house were expecting us; and, seeing that Samarkand has no hotel it was a great treat to find ourselves in the best quarters in the town, with everything clean and comfortable, including the luxury of a bath. The palace is an oblong, lofty building on one floor, with a massive porch midway on the longer side. The interior is divided lengthwise into two suites of rooms, the front door opening into a spacious hall. To the right of this is the dining-room, and to the left sitting and sleeping rooms, whilst the other half of the house is taken up with offices and bed-room at either end, and ball-room and drawing-rooms in the centre. The Russian Government provides houses of this description for governors of provinces, and furnishes them, so that I was fairly familiar with the interior arrangements of the house; but this palace at Samarkand was surrounded by finer gardens, and had a more imposing approach than any other similar residence I remembered to have seen. General Korolkoff, who was temporarily acting as Governor, was not living in the palace, but, though early, we went to him at once, and found him one of the most polished and intellectual of Russian officers it has been my good fortune to meet. Botany is one of his studies, and apart from the introduction of Generals Abramoff and Ivanoff, I had another to him from M. Regel, the director of the Botanical Gardens at Petersburg. The General spoke French, and was able to give me a good deal of information, so that our time spent indoors was both pleasant and instructive.

We were impatient to see the "lions" of the town, and made our way first to the Gur-Emir, a small but lofty mausoleum surmounted by a melon-shaped dome the top being perhaps from 200 to 250 feet high. On the sides of the building rose two minarets, one being already in ruins, and the other not safe enough to

ascend. Near at hand is a tall arch, also much dilapidated. That which imparts to the building its striking appearance on the exterior is the colour of its enamelled bricks, built in mosaic, and made to represent round the cornice enormous Arabic letters, that could be read, I should think, more than a mile off.

The building is approached under a mosaic portal across a paved court planted with a score of karagach, apricot, plum, and white mulberry trees. Formerly the court was enclosed within a wall, and Vambéry so found it, but now the gateways alone remain. The front of the building, as the law directs, is towards the south, but the entrance is on the west, and over the gateway is written in white letters on blue ground, "This is the work of poor Abdullah, son of Mahmoud of Ispahan." We mount five stone steps, and at the distance of six paces another step, and then arrive at the first wooden door leading to a vestibule, the door being modern and plain without, but carved within. The next door is of ancient carving, inlaid with ivory, and over it is a low, square, wooden window of open work ; above this is a second window of alabaster, and yet higher a third, also of alabaster, the latter two with oval pediments. On the right is a door admitting to a long chamber, where are buried some of the female members of Timur's family, and similarly on the left is a door opening into a low, arched chamber, surmounted by four cupolas, wherein, according to Fedchenko, are the tombs of Timur's son Mirza-Shah-Rokh and his family. Still further to the left, in a wing of the principal building, is an entrance, leading to the tombs. Probably it is that referred to by Fedchenko in the crypt, in the wall of which, he says, "there was once a door through which the dead were brought in, but it is now built up with bricks. At one time there were four entrances into this building, signifying that people flocked from the four quarters of the world to the tomb of the great Emir."

On entering the principal doorway we found ourselves in an octagonal chamber, ten paces in diameter, wainscoted to a height of nearly five feet with *yashma*, or jasper, as I was told, and as is commonly said, but which Dr. Schuyler asserts to be "hexagonal plates of finely-carved transparent gypsum." I brought away a piece found among the *débris* outside, and on showing it at the Museum of Natural History in South Kensington, it has been pronounced to be white, translucent, and massive carbonate of lime. Above this are three rows of niches carved in sandstone, a foot and a half high, then inscriptions, formerly blue, 18 inches in height, also in niches; and above all this a continuance of niches, beautifully carved, and crowned by a fine arch. The colour of the whole is greyish white, and looks somewhat dingy and old. In the eastern wall, facing Mecca, is an arched recess called the Mikhrab, wherein rest the remains of Said-Mir-Omar, son of one of Timur's preceptors. Opposite the doorway by which we entered stood a pillar perhaps four feet high, surmounted by a dome, under which was formerly kept burning, says Ujfalvy, "the lamp of perpetual fire."* I cannot answer for the perpetuity of the fire at Samarkand, but I found there a dirty three-lipped lamp of unusual form, left probably by a pilgrim, and the like to which I was told I could get in the bazaar; whereupon I begged the mullah in charge to let me have that, and I gave him money to purchase another in its place. I was glad to have secured this lamp from so interesting a spot, and the more so because in my subsequent wanderings I did not meet with another of precisely the same form. The pillar is said to indicate, I believe, where the head lies, and near it is erected a

* Reminding one of the Jewish tabernacle, "And the lamp to burn always," Exodus xxvii. 20, an imitation of which I remember meeting with at Worms, where in an old synagogue they showed a lamp said to have been burning since the 7th century, in honour of two Christians who then saved the Jews.

rough pole, from which hangs, as usual over a Muham-madan hero, a banner and horse-tail.

On the floor of the mausoleum, surrounded by an open-worked railing of carved alabaster, are seven cenotaphs. Near the pillar already mentioned is the highest but least elegant one, that of Mir-Saïd-Barak, or Mir-Kulan-Saïd-Baraka, Timur's preceptor and friend. In a line with this is Tamerlane's own monument, and near it that of his grandson, Ulug-Beg, who, according to the inscription, died in 1449. The other stones cover the graves of Timur's descendants or friends.

The one stone really remarkable, said indeed to be unique, is that over the tomb of Tamerlane. It occupies the exact centre of the mosque. The other monuments are of white marble, but his is greenish black, 6 feet long, 17 inches wide, and 14 inches thick, and of a single block of nephrite or jade, the largest monolith of that material known. The surface is covered with tracery, and around the edge is a complicated inscription in antique letters, giving, says Dr. Schuyler, "Timur's name and titles, together with those of his ancestors, and the date of his death, 1405."

The floor of the mausoleum near the monuments is covered with hexagonal stones of what is said to be jasper, but more probably is of the same stone as the wainscoting. A broad spiral flight of steps of grey burnt brick leads into the crypt, where are the graves, and over them slabs of white limestone, seven of them being arranged exactly under their respective representatives above. These, too, are nearly covered with quotations, it is said, from the Koran.

The Gur-Emir was built by Timur over the remains of his preceptor Saïd in A.D. 1386, some time before his own death. Timur died in Otrar, within 400 miles of Samarkand, but his body, according to his own directions, was laid by the side of that of his preceptor. The famous monolith was brought to Samarkand in 1415. Some say that it was the present

of a Mongol princess. Devotees and pilgrims used to flock with great reverence to Timur's grave, but the place seems to have fallen into neglect until the coming of the Russians.

About a hundred paces from the Gur-Emir there is a small building called Ak-Serai, where, tradition says, some of Timur's wives are buried. The place is now in ruins, and serves as a stable, but in Vambéry's time there was hanging aloft on the side of the dome a skein, said to contain, from the beard of the Prophet, hair which was supposed to have protected the dome from further decay. I saw nothing of the Prophet's beard, though I may mention that the dome of the Gur-Emir was cracked from the effects of a recent earthquake, and at the time of my visit was undergoing repairs. I took the opportunity to get specimens of the enamelled bricks, for which purpose I mounted the scaffolding, accompanied by a number of boys, who readily searched among the *débris* for suitable pieces, and one of them brought several in his lap to the palace.

The object in Samarkand next in interest to Timur's tomb is, beyond question, the mosque of Shah-Zindeh. The legend related by the mullahs concerning this building is that a thousand years ago there lived a saint, whose name was Hazret-i-Shah-Zindeh, who one day dug a pit and disappeared in it, saying that he would live there for ever. Time ran on, but there were unmistakable signs of the continued existence of the saint. Timur, wishing to be convinced of the miraculous preservation of the holy man, caused several persons to be let down into the pit. But none of them came again to the top, whereupon one man volunteered to descend, directing, however, that he should be lowered head foremost, because he said it was not respectful to go down feet foremost to the saint. When this man reached the bottom of the pit he found the saint in prayer, and was so struck by his

appearance that he fainted, and remained senseless for three days. When he recovered, the saint told him all was well, because he was evidently a God-fearing man, but that if he uttered a word of what he had seen he and his children to the eighth generation should be dumb. On regaining the earth's surface, the man, threatened by Timur with death, told everything, and it came to pass that he was struck dumb. Whereupon Timur, in the interest of the poor man, for whose sin he was himself answerable, prayed to the saint, and, to propitiate him, erected in his honour the splendid edifice called the Shah-Zindeh (or living king). Nevertheless, says the legend, that man and his children to the eighth generation were all dumb.

The mosque of Shah-Zindeh, or more properly Kasim-bin-Abbas, is situated about a mile beyond the city gates, built, as it were, in stages on the side of a hill, on which is an immense cemetery, still used, and from which are visible the seven domes of the mosque. The gateway opens upon the road, and is approached by several steps. On the right at entering is a small court, with chambers for the mullahs, and a well of excellent water, whilst on the left is a hall or mosque, where Muhammadan service is held. When we entered, worship was being conducted by a Muhammadan sect called Nadamat, closely resembling the service I had seen at Constantinople of the so-called "howling" dervishes, which I shall describe later on. Mounting a broad flight of 37 high steps, which were once covered with marble, we came to a long uncovered gallery, flanked by two lofty chambers open at the side and capped with cupolas.

Along this gallery were pointed out to us several tombs, and among them those of a sister and an uncle of Tamerlane, the enamel work on all of them being more beautiful than any I saw elsewhere in Central Asia, unless, perhaps, at Kunia Urgenj. In Dr. Schuyler's time he says that there were quantities of

fragments to be picked up, but the Russians have since done much, as at Tamerlane's tomb, to restore the building and remove the *débris*. I found the mullahs very willing to get me some specimens, and, though making heavy baggage, I was thankful to secure some of each kind.

At the end of the gallery we came to the ancient mosque with its courts, chambers, and crypt. In one of the rooms was a door of iron grating, secured by a fish-shaped lock, having behind it, dimly distinguishable, a monument, or object covered with cloths. In an adjoining room was an immense Koran, 6 feet by 4 when open, and we were shown an underground cell, where devotees might shut themselves up for 40 days, fasting and praying to the saint. In reply to my inquiry how much those fasting ate, I was informed that of the 10 or 15 who come there annually, some eat on the evening of each day, some only once in three days, and all as little as possible. In former times the rulers of Samarkand paid their reverence at Shah-Zindeh before entering the city in triumph, and the mosque became a famous place of pilgrimage. In Vambéry's day there were offered for the faithful to kiss, three flags, an old sword, and a breastplate, as relics of Timur, and also there were said to exist certain relics of the saint; but I saw nothing of these, and when I wished to look down the well of Shah Zindeh, I was asked not to do so, the mullahs saying that even von Kaufmann, the Governor-General, had respected the holy place, and did not enter there. These things naturally reminded me of the so-called holy places on the European Continent, but the votive offerings left at the holy places of Islam are fewer and much poorer than the offerings at the shrines of Roman or Russian saints. Here they consisted merely of prayer-cloths, on which Moslems have knelt, and of pictures brought by pilgrims from Mecca. I found the mullahs by no means fanatical, for they thankfully

accepted a Persian Bible, and appeared delighted to get it.

Returning down the Shah-Zindeh avenue, between rows of gypsies who sit like Bar Timaeus "by the way-side begging," the traveller regains the Tashkend road and comes to the Place of Bibi-Khanum, or Queen Bibi (*khan* and *khanum* meaning king and queen, lord and lady), where are ruins of other two buildings that date from the time of Timur. The Bibi is spoken of as his favourite wife, and the daughter of a Chinese emperor, who, from her private purse, built the medresse that bears her name.

There remain several indications to show that the Bibi-Khanum medresse must have been one of, if not, the finest in Central Asia. Its chief mosque is said by Khanikoff to have been built by the side of the medresse in 1398, by Timur. It is crowned with what is for Turkistan a gigantic double dome; but what struck me most was the lofty and graceful arch of the *Pishtak*, or front entrance. Its proportions seemed to me perfect; and whether it was the contrast to the surrounding ruins, and crumbling minarets, or what, I know not, but as I gazed I began to think the arch one of the loftiest I had ever seen. I tried to compare with it, by the eye of memory, the east window of York Minster, and it was not till I measured the breadth of the Bibi-Khanum arch, which I found to be 50 feet, that I could bring myself to realize that its height could not exceed 150 feet. The contour and lines of this ruin show it to have been the finest of the buildings in Samarkand. The depth of the portal was 30 feet, and the walls of this and other parts of the building were once covered with polished mosaic, striking for its medley of colours. The design has been skilfully executed, and bears marks of cultivated taste. The colouring and gold in many places still look fresh, but none of the porcelain is of open work like that of the Shah-Zindeh.

On either side of the principal entrance is a slender hexagonal tower measuring 54 feet round, from which the mosaic is peeling fast. Not far distant is a large square stone slab, sloping towards the centre, for Mussulman ablutions, and in the middle of the building is an immense *rahle*, or lectern, of white marble, 7 feet long by 6 wide, having the appearance of two sloping desks joined at the lower sides and supported on nine low pillars. On this formerly used to lie a huge copy of the Koran, seen by the Russian Ephremof, who visited Samarkand in 1770. The lectern, with its parchment book and large characters, was placed within sight of a high window at which tradition says Bibi-Khanum used to sit and read. The chief merit of the lectern now consists in its miracle-working power of permanently curing pains in the back-bones, provided the sufferer manages to crawl beneath, which the faithful do in all directions.

Bibi-Khanum lies buried in an adjoining octagonal building, called Bibi-Khanum-Gur-Khana. When the Russian authorities were clearing the courts of the medresses of rubbish, they found this small mosque, which had been concealed by the surrounding buildings and almost forgotten, but wherein they were told was the tomb of Bibi-Khanum. A short time after, the roof, falling in, broke through the floor, and exposed a large vault containing grave-stones, with inscriptions of prayers in ancient characters, but without names or dates. I entered the vault, and saw there five tombstones, all lying east and west, and said to be those of Bibi and four children. The mosque and medresse of Bibi-Khanum are too much dilapidated to be repaired or restored, but the Russians have cleared away the *débris*, and surrounded them with palings to keep them from further injury.

From these buildings we went to the citadel to see another curiosity—said to date from Timur's days—

namely, a coronation stone, called the *Kok-tash*. In this citadel was a palace built for the Emir Nasr-Ullah, and in the palace a court that was used for state occasions, which Vambéry calls "Talari Timur," or "the reception-hall of Timur." The court is oblong, and on the sides other than that where we entered, there runs round the building a raised covered veranda, or cloister, supported by wooden columns, whilst at the end opposite the entrance is placed the famous stone called Kok-tash.

The Kok-tash is an oblong block of greyish marble, with dark streaks, polished on the top, carved in arabesques on the sides, and with small pilasters at the corners. There is a railing put round the stone now to keep it from injury, and behind it, on the wall, is affixed an object alluded to by both Vambéry and Schuyler, though I have no recollection of seeing it—namely, an oval piece of metal like half a coconut, bearing an Arabic inscription engraved in Cufic letters.

When we walked down from the gallery some 3 or 4 feet, into the central space below, somewhat resembling an arena, there was pointed out to us in the middle a large octagonal stone about 3 feet high, in the top of which is a cylindrical hollow, like a water basin, which served, we were told, for the execution of offenders.*

The mention of one more ruin will complete the list of those immediately connected with Timur. I mean the *Ishrat Khana*, in the suburbs of the town, whither, according to tradition, Timur was wont to repair for recreation. One may still perceive in the ruin small apartments in addition to the large central

I know not if this be true, but coupling with it the statement of Baber that usurpers were put to death at the Kok-sarai, and recalling the fact that the Emir Nasr-Ullah, even on his death-bed, caused to be brought the sister of one of his adversaries, to be slain in his presence, the position of this stone, as an alleged place of execution, seems to illustrate Luke xix. 27, "But those, mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them *before me*."

hall in the second floor. The inhabitants of Samarkand relate that Bibi-Khanum built this for her tomb, but that Timur, on paying a visit of inspection on the completion of the building, was so delighted that he kissed his wife, whereupon, confused and pleased, Bibi-Khanum said, "Let this be Ishrat-Khan's house of gaiety and pleasure; a repository for my remains shall be built elsewhere."

On reaching a foreign city for the first time, it is a favourite endeavour of mine to mount some lofty pinnacle from which to obtain a view of the whole. I lost no time in doing this at Samarkand, ascending for that purpose one of the minarets of the Ulug-Beg Medresse, said to be 150 feet high.

We gained from this place a capital view of the town. To the north, five miles off, lay the wooded and cultivated country on the banks of the Zarafshan, with the Chupan-Ata hills on the north-east, and nearer were the Shah-Zindeh, and the Bibi-Khanum ruins, as well as the Tashkend road, and the avenue by which we had arrived. On the east was the Kalendar-Kaneh gate and the roads leading to Penjakend and Urgut. On the west was the citadel with the Emir's palace, and in it the Koktash; and beyond the citadel, radiating like a fan, were the straight and regular streets of the Russian quarter, with its public garden, Governor's palace, and shady promenade; whilst on the south rose the graceful dome of the Gur-Emir, and beyond it the Khoja-Akhrar gate. The wide streets, and the coloured roofs of the Russian houses, presented a marked contrast to the low mud house-tops, and the narrow, tortuous lanes of the native city, in which, however, the direction of the principal thoroughfares did not appear to us so hopelessly irregular and intricate as at Tashkend and Khokand. Moreover, the city is seen to be large, and full of gardens, and these, watered by three streams, give to it an aspect less dismal than most of the towns we had seen. At the same time, it

is a long way from an Englishman's idea of what the native poets have called it—"a terrestrial paradise"!

The city had six gates. One on the south, called Khoja-Akhrar, leads to a medresse of that name, about four miles distant, in the court of which is a pool of water and some venerable plane-trees. This medresse is interesting also, because it is said to have once possessed the Koran of Othman. There is another tradition interesting to literary antiquarians to which I ought here perhaps to allude, respecting the collection of Greek, Syrian, Chaldean, and Armenian manuscripts said to have been brought to Samarkand by Tamerlane. But the Russians have been able to find no trace of the said library.

As far as I could judge, opinions differed widely as to my chance of finding manuscripts in Central Asia, but some thought it possible that, on the approach of the Russians, the books in Samarkand might have been taken to Bokhara to the palace of the Emir. Accordingly, one of the few things I asked of his Majesty, during my audience at Shahr-i-sabz, was that I might be allowed to see his library. He replied in the affirmative; but when I reached his palace at Bokhara I was shown nothing of the kind, nor did the officials left in charge seem to know anything about a library! On another occasion, in reply to my question as to the whereabouts of the Emir's books, one of the officials told me, with the utmost simplicity, that when the Emir went away for the summer, he took his books in a cart with him—the man meaning, I fancy, his records and account books. My small efforts, therefore, for the discovery of Tamerlane's library were fruitless, and nothing that I saw or heard led me to think that anything of the kind exists.

But I have been descanting upon these antiquities from the summit of the Ulug-Beg minaret, looking in the direction of the medresse of Khoja-Akhrar, whilst immediately below are three medresses, the fronts of

which bound as many sides of the handsomest Rhigistan, or public place, in Central Asia.

That on the left, on the west of the square, is the college of Ulug-Beg, its founder. This monarch, during his father's lifetime, is said to have attracted to Samarkand the most celebrated astronomers from different parts of the world, and in the observatory and college to have had more than a hundred persons constantly occupied in scientific pursuits. But the college, though once the home of mathematics and learning, is now in a ruinous state. It is only one floor high, and contains 24 rooms. Its endowment is 430 acres of land, 2 bazaars, 211 shops, and 71 warehouses, bringing in an annual income of £100.

The college on the east is the Shir-Dar, which has in front a lofty arched portal, with two stories of students' rooms. The sides of the medresse have no windows. At the corners in front are minarets, and at the other end cupolas surmounted by melon-shaped domes. In the upper corners of the façade over the arch are rude representations in blue and yellow tiles of the lion and the sun, the Persian arms, whence the name given to the medresse of *Shir-Dar*, or lion-bearing. The façade is richly decorated with mosaic in earthenware tiles, green, blue, white, and red. The interior arrangement in Central Asian colleges generally consists of a large quadrangular court, surrounded by a range of buildings, with chambers for teachers and pupils; the mesjed, mosque, or, as we should say, chapel, being on the side towards Mecca. On entering the Shir-Dar, the three blocks of buildings are seen to have two tolerably lofty stories, containing 64 chambers, each for two students, many of whom go away in summer to work. This medresse and the Tillah-Kari are said to have been built about 1618 by Yalang Tash Bahadur, an Uzbek, and vizier of Imam Kuli Khan, from the spoils of the shrine at Imam Riza in Meshed; and an inscription on the walls of the Shir-Dar, in verse,

in honour of the builder, affirms that the Moon, on beholding these splendid edifices, placed the finger of astonishment on her lips.

The college on the north side of the Rhigistan is called *Tillah-Kari*, that is, covered with *tillahs*, or gold coins. The exterior is a good deal crumbled; it has minarets, and two stories of windows in front, whilst the interior is in a better state of preservation than either of the two just described. Here we were taken to the mosque on the left-hand side of the court, and our attention was drawn to the carved woodwork steps of the gilded marble pulpit, on which the moulding approached very nearly to the dog-tooth carving of the Gothic style. Greater pains and art seem to have been bestowed on this medresse than on the others, and more gold is seen in the ornamentation. The wall of the *kibleh*, or niche, where is supposed to be the Imaum (or image, called *Mikhrab*, which presents itself to the Moslem mind in prayer), is gilded, and bears the inscription, "There is no God but God, and Muhammad is His Prophet." *

Opposite the Shir-Dar in the Rhigistan our attention was called to a square, raised platform, and on one of its corners the small conical tomb of a butcher who supplied the workmen with their meat when building the medresse. Schuyler says he frequently saw candles there and other votive offerings, so that I presume the butcher was a saint.

There are other ancient but less noteworthy buildings in and around the city, such as the tomb of the giant Daniar Palvan, and the ruins of the palace Khilvat-Khaneh, said to have belonged to one of the wives of Tamerlane; but I think I

* All these medresses, and, in fact, the religious buildings generally of Central Asia, are ornamented with enamel work of the following kinds: first, bricks with a smooth surface covered with a coat of self-coloured enamel. The pieces I obtained from Tamerlane's tomb were all of this character, nor did I see there any other. Secondly, the same, but with two shades of one colour in the same brick. Thirdly, minute

have said sufficient for the present of the Muham-madans and their antiquities, and so turn to the professors of a more ancient and, to me, more interesting religion—namely, that of the Central Asian Jews.

pieces of brick about half an inch thick, coated with self-coloured enamel, fitting one into the other, and arranged in mosaic in a bed of plaster. Of this I secured a specimen 10 inches long by 7 broad, the colours of the pieces being of dark blue, light green, two shades of brownish-yellow, and white. Fourthly, bricks with open work, moulded or embossed on the surface, and covered with a coating of enamel of one or more colours. These I saw only at the Shah-Zindeh, where I was fortunate in finding a mullah, who, in his ardour to oblige me, ran and fetched a ladder, climbed to a loose brick we had espied (though not of open-work) and brought it down in triumph. Fifthly, bricks flat or rounded, with smooth surface, covered with various designs, writing, or tracery. The piece secured by the mullah just alluded to is of diamond shape, 9 inches long, and an inch and a quarter thick, with a design in five colours, but of rather coarse workmanship. Another piece of the same class, but of finer workmanship, obtained from the Tillah-Kari, and measuring 5 inches by 4, has remains of the gold visible, and besides two shades of blue, light green, red, and white, has what looks like part of a plum-coloured flower. A third specimen of the same class has a white Arabic inscription on a dark brown ground. These last two colours are noticeable, because M. Ujfalvy, who, as an antiquarian, went into this matter somewhat closely, affirms that the dark brown enamel is found only at Afrasiab, where I did not go, whilst the plum-colour he does not mention at all, but only enumerates blue of the two shades of turquoise and lapis lazuli, white, green, yellow, red, and pink of many shades. My finest specimen, however, of this class was brought me by a mullah from the Ulug-Beg medresse, a brick about an inch thick and 18 inches square, so tough that it stood unbroken a journey of hundreds of miles across the desert on the back of a camel, in addition to the ups and downs of the tarantass and railway and steamer travelling for 4,000 miles to London. It has at one side a border 5 inches wide, of light and dark blue, with red and gold colouring, and the remainder of the surface is occupied with the lower sections of tall Arabic letters that probably formed part of a large inscription running along a cornice. The bricks I obtained subsequently from Kunia Urgenj are self-coloured, like Class 1, but measuring $7 \times 2\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and of great purity of colour; also some of Mosaic, like Class 3, and a small piece of Class 5, only that this last is of altogether finer pencilling. I have thus described somewhat fully these enamels, because by some writers they are made much of, and they represent one of the very few branches of art to be met with in Central Asia. They are also interesting as specimens of what could be done by Asiatics 500 years ago, though poor enough as compared with Western productions.

CHAPTER XIX.

OUR STAY AT SAMARKAND.

Visit to Jewish quarters during the Feast of Tabernacles.—Synagogue choristers.—Visit to rabbi.—Local traditions of Jews in China.—Hebrew pronunciation.—Visit to military and native hospitals.—Education and morals of Russian officers and men.—Samarkand bazaar.—Public-houses of Zarafshan, and the Turkistan liquor traffic.—Governor's information respecting the province.—Attendants for our journey, and Asiatic interpreter.—Purchase of antiquities and distribution of the Scriptures.—General Ivanoff.

WE had not been many hours in Samarkand before we made the acquaintance of one of the Jews. He was on the official staff of interpreters, and General Korolkoff would have sent him with us for our guide about the town, but that we had come during the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles, whereof their law said, "Ye shall do no servile work therein" (Lev. xxlii. 36); and he therefore explained that he could not drive with us to Tamerlane's tomb, though his conscience was so far unfettered that he expressed his willingness to walk there. We therefore set out, and he told us on the way how much more strict in keeping their law are the Asiatic than the European Jews. He left us on our return from the Gur-Emir, and we set off to the Rhigistan with another interpreter; but after seeing the three medresses and the Shah-Zindeh, already described, we went by a cross-cut to the Jews' quarter, and met again the Jewish interpreter at the house of a fellow-Israelite, Raphael Moses Kalendaroff. I fancy

he was one of their wealthy men, perhaps he who built the synagogue, for he bore the same name, and it was in his house we were to see how they kept the Feast of Tabernacles.

In his court or garden was erected a cotton tent, outside of which nothing might be eaten for seven days. Here I presented the Lord Mayor's letter and the introduction of the Moscow rabbi, received at once a welcome, and was invited to eat. The ancient Jewish law directed (Lev. xxiii. 39—44 ; Neh. viii. 14—16) that the people should dwell in huts,* which is still interpreted to mean that the roof, if not the sides, should be of branches ; but these would not be easily obtained in sufficient quantity in Samarkand, and I am under the impression that not even the roof was so formed. My host, however, had remembered the injunction of the law in providing, at least, "the fruit of goodly trees," if not "olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and willows of the brook." Perhaps these latter were represented by the leafy decorations over our heads in the form of a large framework, something like a chandelier, from which were hanging apples, quinces, and saffron flowers, whilst on the carpeted floor were placed dishes of parched peas, pistachio nuts, grapes, peaches, and apples, as well as mutton and carrot pies, and roasted apricot and plum kernels. Many came in, and, kneeling down, sat upon their haunches, but not cross-legged, round the four sides of the tent. I began at once to ply them with questions respecting their condition and that of their brethren in Bokhara. In the case of the latter we heard again the story related at Khokand, how that the Bokhariot Jews may not build enough synagogues for their need, that they may not buy a house from a Mussulman without the Emir's permission, that they may not ride on horseback in the town of Bokhara, that their head-covering must be a

* סֹכֶת, not אֹהֶל, which latter is a tent of skins or cloth.

black calico cap, worth only a few pence, and the girdle about their loins, not even of leather, but of rope ; also that when a Mussulman beats or insults a Jew, the latter must always look down and humbly submit. Another hardship I had not heard of before was that under the Emir's government, if two Jews disagree, their dispute must be settled by Mussulman law ; and my informants said that so intimidated were the Bokhariot Jews that they dared not come to ask the Russians for help. I inquired whether I could



A JEWESS OF CENTRAL ASIA.

do anything by interceding with the Emir on their behalf, but they said "No," for that such a course would only make matters worse.

On leaving the tent I was invited to look at a new house my host was building, which evidently he thought very grand. The many-coloured decorations of the walls, after the fashion of the Sarts, was the principal feature that struck me, and we then walked on the flat roof, where apricots were drying in the sun. We could see down into a neighbouring yard, where was a young Jewess, unveiled. This would have called for

no remark in England, but directly she caught sight of me she ran away, as if it were improper to be seen unveiled by a stranger. Perhaps this would not have been so, however, had my host been alone, as I believe the Jewish women in Central Asia are veiled only in the streets to protect themselves from insult. On leaving, Moses, our Jewish interpreter, pressed us to come and look at his festal tent. This we did, and noticed, among the things suspended, a plant whose seeds were said to cure squinting.

We then went to the synagogue, allowed to the Jews of Samarkand only since the Russians came, where the best chorister in the region was that evening to sing. The crowd was dense, and in a short time two singers appeared; the "*primo*," a delicate, modest-looking man, who blushed at the eagerness with which his arrival was awaited, whilst the "*secondo*" was a brazen-faced fellow, who carried his head on one side, as if courting attention, and with the assurance that he should have it. They were introduced to us, and began at once, that we might hear. The singing, so called, was the most remarkable that up to that time I had ever heard. The first voice led off in a key so high, that he had to strain for some seconds before he could utter a sound at all. After this he proceeded very slowly as to the number of words he sang, but prolonged his notes into numerous flourishes, screaming as loudly as he could in falsetto. The second voice was an accompaniment for the first; but as both bawled as stoutly as possible, I soon voted it anything but good music, and intimated that it was time for us to go. The congregation, moreover, were crowding round, without the smallest semblance of their being engaged in divine worship. They were anxious to detain us, however, as long as possible, and the rabbi having read my documents, showed us such objects of interest as they possessed; among others a specimen of very diminutive writing, and he asked my acceptance, as a

souvenir, of a picture, brought, I fancy, from Jerusalem, and hanging in their synagogue. After this we were obliged to hurry away, the rabbi urging us to pay him a visit, and another Jew assuring us that, if we would call upon him, we should meet with a better reception than they had been able on that day to give us.

We returned to the palace, and next day General Korolkoff took us to a school, where we saw that of the 77 boys, no less than 30 were Jews. It was noteworthy, moreover, that, as with boys of the same race in Europe, their abilities were remarkably good, putting in the shade those of their Russian and Sart school-fellows.* I asked to hear the Jew boys read; but here again sprung up a question of conscience, or rather of law, for it was a feast day, and though they had come to school because ordered by the Russian authorities to do so, (I suppose that I might see the school, for I fancy it was a holiday) yet they might not read, because that would be to work.

Two days later we called on the rabbi, who was still keeping the feast in his tabernacle, where he received us, and of whom I was glad to make some inquiries respecting his people. He said there were 2,500 persons dwelling in 400 houses in Samarkand. He confirmed the traditional interpretation I had read in Dr. Wolff's book, that by the Habor, in 2 Kings xvii. 6, and xviii. 11, they understand Bokhara, Samarkand, and the region round about.† With reference to the lost tribes, he related a well-known Jewish legend that on the Sambation (סמבטיון), which he located in China, but which others, I believe, affirm to

* A superiority not confined apparently to the present century, for in Nebuchadnezzar's court in Babylon, "in all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king inquired of (Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah), he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm" (Dan. i. 20).

† He offered no reason that would at all affect, however, Canon Rawlinson's statement in the Bible Dictionary, that Habor is identified beyond all reasonable doubt with a famous affluent of the Euphrates, still known as the *Khabour*.

be in Africa) lives a people whom the Chinese call sons of Abram, and that Mussulmans profess to the Jews in Samarkand to have seen their brethren in China ; but the Samarkand Jews have not done so, and for this wonderful reason, that the aforesaid river is hot on six days and cold only on the seventh, on which day it would be unlawful for the Jews to cross ; but the Muhammadans, not being similarly bound, embrace the opportunity to do so. A second version is that the river, in its course, throws up stones every day, except on the Sabbath.* Another traditional Israeli-tish story he gave, that Samarkand had been destroyed seven times, and therein had perished 24,000 Kohanim Jews, these having had a separate cemetery from the Israelites. Tamerlane, he informed me, was said to have brought from Meshed seven families of Jews, and that their descendants were still living at Bokhara and Samarkand. But all these, I fancy, were very much of the nature of "idle tales," for the rabbi said that the Jews had not been in Samarkand more than a century, and he added that they were from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. The rabbi then added they were Sephardim or Spanish,

* With this story told to me of Jews existing in China, which I heard also at Khokand, it is interesting to compare the account of Mr. Finn, respecting "the orphan colony of Jews" in the city of Kae-Fung-Foo, who (in 1870) were all but absorbed into the surrounding Chinese and Muhammadans. Tablets on their synagogue testified to several migrations thither, the first in the Chow dynasty between B.C. 1122 and B.C. 249, and a third as late as A.D. 1163. In 1843 a letter was addressed to them, and sent through the English consul at Ning-po. Five years later, tidings were heard of the people ; and a little later a letter from them was received, telling of the decay of their religion and synagogue. Some supposed, from the information given, that the colony arrived from Khorassan and Samarkand on the way from Persia, because Persian words were found in some of the inscriptions of their sacred books. Messengers were sent to the colony from Bishop Smith, of Victoria, and some of their Hebrew writings purchased. The remnant of the people was again visited in 1866 by Dr. Martin, an American Presbyterian missionary, and considerable interest in their desolate condition has been shown by both Jews and Christians, though I am not aware that any practical suggestions on their behalf have been successfully carried out

and asked me whether the English Jews were "Ashkenazim,"—that is, Eastern, like the German Jews,—a question they quickly answered for themselves; for after asking the rabbi to repeat to me a few verses in Hebrew from the beginning of Genesis, that I might hear his pronounciation, I proceeded to do the same to him. They said at once that my pronounciation was that of the Sephardim.*

The rabbi gave us fruit, and appeared quite to expect us to dine, but we knew the General would be waiting for us, and so had to ask to be excused.

On Friday, the morning after our arrival at Samarkand, General Korolkoff took us to visit the military hospital. It was situated without the city on the southwest, beyond the Russian town, having two kinds of erections—namely, well-built houses of brick for the winter, and summer tents, from which latter the patients were to be transferred, if I remember rightly, on the morrow, September 30th. The general arrangements were similar to those we had seen at the military hospital in Tashkend, but on a smaller scale, there being only 117 patients. The skin diseases were the most interesting, and among them a case of *rishta* or kind of guinea worm, peculiar to Bokhara and adjacent towns. The medical officer kindly gave me a specimen of the parasite, which I brought safely to London. We saw likewise at Samarkand several cases of an endemic skin disease, common in Turkistan, and known among the Russians as Sart sickness, or disease. It is the Afghan *yaria* or plague, and is known also as *pasha-khurda*, or consuming fly.

On the following day we visited two hospitals the Russians have established for native women and men. The hospital was particularly well built and clean, the patients eating in a common hall.

* I observed that in the words, בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא, they pronounced them instead of *B'raishith bara*, *B'raishit bora*, but not *B'raishis*, as I have heard among the Ashkenazim.

From the military hospital the General took us to see two schools and an asylum, established by the Russians in part for the education of natives. In the boys' school were 77 scholars, of whom 22 were Russians, 30 Jews, and the remainder Sarts. Among the last was the son of the native police-master of the Sart town, a boy of 14, who had been three years in the school. He was dressed in a khalat, with printed cotton trousers, yellow boots, and a white turban. He had, moreover, a watch and chain, and was evidently a grandee, rejoicing in the name of Sevarkul Bek Sultanbekoff. Another Sart boy sported a watch by "John Salter, London." I did not gather that the Sarts showed any extraordinary capacity, or that they were particularly keen for instruction. The Jewish boys in the school mentally excelled all their schoolfellows, and came in goodly numbers; but to the girls' school, whither we next went, neither Sarts nor Jews would send their daughters, though both schools were free. This, I presume, would be too great an innovation on their Oriental ideas. The 24 scholars in the girls' school were all Russian. Besides these two institutions, I heard of a boarding-school in Samarkand, where the boys wear uniform, and we visited an asylum for orphans and poor children, supported by voluntary contributions, the funds being raised, as so often is the case in Russia, by concerts, bazaars, etc. The building contained, however, only four girls and five boys.

After visiting the schools we went to the citadel, where are the town barracks, whilst the camp was situated, as we afterwards saw, 15 miles on the south of the town. We were thrown into the company of a good many officers in Turkistan, and the impression they left on my mind was favourable. I thought Russians seemed rather fond of telling us that many of the Turkistan officers were of questionable character, having squandered their fortune in vicious living at

Petersburg, and then come to Central Asia to recover themselves. Others, again, were supposed to be there for the extra pay, and the opportunities in war time of rapid advancement. Drunkenness is reported to be the chief vice among the troops, and the great majority of crimes and offences are committed by the men in this state. During the severe expedition to Khiva, when the troops were forbidden the use of spirits, and a ration of tea issued instead, offences, it was said, were rare.

We saw near Samarkand a number of flat targets to represent soldiers drawn up in line of battle to be shot at for practice in three ways, at the head, at half the body, and the whole body, at various distances from 100 up to 1,000 yards. Had we stopped a few days longer we could have seen some practice, but now I can only quote from my statistics, to the effect that in ball practice the rifle battalions head the list with the predicates of "very good" and "excellent," the practice of the rest of the army being less satisfactory.

The same day on which we visited the citadel, with its barracks and soldiers, we saw also the bazaar. This building suffered a good deal at the time of the Russian conquest, and has been to some extent rebuilt. There remains, however, a large octagonal building belonging to the old bazaar, wherein we bought skull-caps and some native olive-green snuff, and small gourds that serve for snuff-boxes. Samarkand does a considerable trade in cotton, silk, wheat, and rice, also in knives, fruit, horses, sheep, and mules. Wheat, rice, and silk are exported principally to Bokhara. The cotton is sent through Tashkend to Russia. From the Bokhariot province of Shahr-i-sabz, lying south of Samarkand, they bring wheat, excellent fruit, including pomegranates, and pomegranate rind for making a red dye, likewise silk webs. From the province of Hissar is brought salt, well known for its excellent quality. The bazaar is seen to greatest advantage on market days, that

is Thursdays or Sundays, when the principal street from the place Bibi-Khanum to the Righistan is so full of people that there is hardly room to move, but amongst them there is scarcely a woman to be seen. There were exposed for sale Bokhara velvets of very original patterns and brilliant colours. I bought handkerchiefs of thick silk from, I suppose, Hissar, and something more curious in the form of a native enamelled, wooden saddle, with a high pointed pommel, similar to the form used in Mexico.

On the third day of our sojourn in Samarkand we visited the prison, which I shall describe hereafter. I may here mention, however, concerning the principal feeders of the prisons—I mean the public-houses—and also *à propos* of the drunkenness alleged above to be the prime cause of military offences, that in the Zarafshan province for six years, 1868-73, the number of public-houses, wine-cellars, distilleries, and breweries, progressed in the following order:—3, 5, 10, 45, 53, 40. These figures relate, I believe, to the Russian population, since the Mussulmans are supposed to be, and for the most part are, abstainers from intoxicating drinks.

On returning each day to the palace after our sight-seeing and researches, we were favoured at dinner with the presence of General Korolkoff, and sometimes of his brother, Colonel Korolkoff, Colonel Alexandroff, and others; and as the acting Governor was well posted in the affairs of his province, I gained from him a great deal of information, especially in matters that touched at all upon botany and agricultural produce.

Besides these subjects of general interest, we discussed my future journey. Thus far I had accomplished a posting journey of about 2,800 miles by the hire of upwards of 800 horses, and the question now arose as to how I was to proceed to Bokhara. The direct road, that might be traversed in the tarantass, was

through Daul and Chimbai to Katte-Kurgan on the frontier, a distance of 43 miles, for which one could get post-horses; but for the remaining 100 miles to Bokhara there were no post-horses; and if any animals could be hired, it would be to Bokhara only, and not beyond. I was specially desirous, however, to have an interview with the Emir, who was staying for the summer at Shahr-i-sabz, to which the nearest route lay over a mountain road, impassable for wheeled vehicles. I determined, therefore, to go on horseback to Shahr-i-sabz, and to send my tarantass to await me at Karshi, which I should have to go through on my roundabout road to Bokhara.

Having thus determined, it was necessary to buy two horses for Mr. Sevier and myself, and to hire a third as a sumpter. Several were brought for inspection to the palace after lunch on Saturday, and I fixed upon two stallions, a chestnut for myself, and a black for Mr. Sevier, at what I thought the wonderfully cheap price of £9 12s. for the two. Just as the bargain was being struck, a native rode up on a tall, graceful creature worthy of Rotten Row, for which he asked £10. Had I wanted one for pleasure only, or to bring to England, I should have chosen this, but we were advised that our former choice was better for the work before us. My horse in particular was pronounced to be excellent, and in the course of the afternoon we rode out to try our steeds, and took the opportunity to call on the *Uyezdi nachalnik*, M. George Alexevitch Arendarenko, who very obligingly offered to place at my disposal two djiguitts, who might accompany us as far as the Oxus. This was a great kindness, the full value of which I did not realize at first. Besides this, M. Arendarenko gave us advice as to our proceedings, and on certain points of Oriental etiquette to be observed in Bokhara.

It was further necessary to secure an interpreter who could speak Russian and Turki, and I should have been

well pleased to take the Jewish official interpreter, to whom I have alluded, but he could not leave during the feast, so General Korolkoff kindly found for us a Tatar, who spoke Russian and Turki, and Tajik besides. This was so far well; but as we should be entirely at the mercy of this man, it was a comfort when M. Arendarenko called upon us, and said that one of our native djiguitts spoke also Russian, so that, if the interpreter did not comport himself satisfactorily, we might send him about his business. As we were leaving Russian territory, I supposed it would be necessary to change my Russian roubles into the gold and silver coin of Bokhara, though Colonel Alexandroff, from the camp, who dined with us, said he had passed from Khiva to Bokhara and found Russian money received in payment everywhere. I thought perhaps his uniform might have something to do with it, but when the money-changer came to the palace with his gold tillahs, my native interpreter seemed also to think it quite needless for me to take them, and I changed only £20, for which I was given in silver 764 tengas, and offered in gold 30 tillahs, equal to 13s. 4d. each, and 50 kopecks. My tengas, therefore, cost me $6\frac{1}{4}$ d. each. The money-changer was not the only mercantile visitor we received at the palace, for when it became known that I was interested in antiquities, an old Khoja and another native brought some ancient coins, which I purchased, and the Khoja said that 19 miles from Bokhara, on the Oxus, is a well, called Magallel Kuyu-baun, at which formerly was a town called Scevineh; that when the sand is blown away, it leaves ruins bare, and those who go there for fodder sometimes find money and rings. He sold me a small cameo that he said had been found there, which has on it a stag or hare running, whence I conclude it to be of Greek workmanship, since the Muhammadan natives of Bokhara do not depict living

creatures. The Khoja said that, were he not so old, he should be well pleased to go with us as interpreter, since he knew the country well. Other antiquities, such as enamelled bricks, were brought us by the mullahs, and when to a sum of money I added, as a present, an Arabic New Testament or Turkish Gospel, they expressed their gratitude. In fact, I went on Sunday afternoon to the Tillah-Kari medresse, and gave a Persian Bible for the use of the mullahs. They thanked me much, and when we walked on to the Shir-Dar, and gave an Arabic New Testament, they were equally obliged. Another thing to be thought of was that, on leaving Samarkand, we were going not only out of the postal union, but of the postal region, and that we must accordingly make up our minds to be for a while dead to the civilized world, and the world to us. As it was, I had received no communications from Europe since leaving Tiumen, though I had despatched many to England; and when I had finally made up my mind to enter Bokhara, I telegraphed to London from Samarkand, at a cost of 24s., "All well. Leave in three days for Bokhara and Khiva. Found no letters at Tashkend. Expect me in December," thinking that this date would give an ample margin for my return, but really expecting to be home before.

During our stay at the palace, we of course learned more of General Ivanoff, our absent host, whom we had left at Tashkend. He was spoken of to us as being of remarkably even temper, as never angry nor particularly pleased, showing neither satisfaction nor displeasure. They told us he possessed great powers of endurance. An instance was quoted of his riding from Petro-Alexandrovsk, where he was governor, to Nukus, a distance of 116 miles, staying for 2 hours only, and then returning, doing the 233 miles in about 36 hours, and then setting to work reading and writing immediately. His bravery, too, was alluded

to in terms equally high. At the taking of Khiva, he and nine others were surrounded in fight by Turko-mans, and he was wounded in the arm ; also by a ball passing through under his knee-cap, and another through his regimental cap, cutting open the scalp ; but even then they said that he declined having his own wounds dressed till he had looked after the welfare of those wounded with him. I did not realize at Tashkend that I had read of him as Colonel Ivanoff, the Governor at the fortress to which Colonel Burnaby was brought after his "ride to Khiva," or that he was the same who generously gave up to MacGahan a portion of his tent in the Khivan campaign ; but I shall not soon forget his kindness in giving us quarters at his house, and doing so much to render pleasant our stay at Samarkand.

CHAPTER XX.

DO WE KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT SIBERIAN PRISONS?

Different estimates of "Through Siberia."—Doubts of sceptical friends.—Prisons supposed to have been prepared for my visits.—The supposition examined.—Opinions of residents in Russia and Siberia.—Testimony of a Swede.—Examination of statements concerning Siberian Prisons in "Called Back."—Prince Krapotkine's censure, and its value.—The class of facts borne witness to in "Through Siberia."

WHEN I returned from my long journey across Northern Asia I gave to the world "an unprejudiced statement of what I saw and heard in the prisons and mines of Siberia." One Russian prison inspector, of high standing, volunteered the remark that what I had said was so perfectly correct that my book might be taken as a standard even by Russian authorities; but another Russian writer has allowed himself to go so far as to say that my book—"in so far at least as it is concerned with gaols and convicts—can only convey false ideas." The worth of this latter criticism may to some extent be gauged by the fact that, although "Through Siberia" has been translated into three languages, and has been honoured with more than 200 literary notices and reviews, yet no such misstatement has been pointed out as to make it necessary in any one of four subsequent editions to alter what had been printed at first. I say

this, not boastfully, still less defiantly, but as affording some sort of proof that I did not write at random.

But I am not so sanguine as to suppose that all are, or are likely to be, convinced. Even among my friends there are those who think I did not see things in their normal condition. This suspicion was pleasantly hinted, before my book appeared, by the late Dean Close, who, writing to me on another subject, playfully added, "I suppose those letters in the *Times* were yours. . . . I should very much doubt whether those cunning Russians have not deceived you. They knew what they were about when they gave you apparent liberty of access to all their prisons. Do you suppose, *if* there were any horrors, they would show them to you? No. They saw in a moment that, if they could apparently open all Siberia to you, they would get what they have got,—a whitewashing in the *Times*! I am not a violent Anti-Russ; but I don't believe that they would show to any Englishman all their heavy irons in Siberia."

Others have said, "Do you not think that the prisons were prepared for your inspection?" And this question was answered in the affirmative by the *St. James's Gazette*, on the authority of "a Russian informant," stating that "official orders were sent before me to the prisons to make things wear a favourable aspect for my visit." Upon seeing this I wrote to the editor "that if his Russian informant, or any other, thinks that I have been duped or misinformed, I am perfectly ready to be questioned, and shall be happy to discuss the question in the public press, provided only that my opponent give facts, dates, names, and places, and do not hide behind general statements and impersonalities." This rejoinder the editor did not publish, and I therefore inserted the challenge in the second, third, fourth, and fifth editions of "Through Siberia," but no one has taken up the challenge.

Let us suppose, however, for a moment, that official orders were sent on before me to make things wear a favourable aspect : then how far could this in all cases have been carried out, and to what extent ? I told the authorities in Petersburg, in May, that I was going to Tiumen, Tomsk, Irkutsk, and Kiakhta, and then I purposed to retrace my steps. In keeping with this, they certainly could have telegraphed that I was coming, but as to *when* I presume they would be at a loss to say, for I did not know myself. I reached Tiumen in 17 days, and can only say that, if the prison authorities there had received orders to make things wear a favourable aspect, they had not efficiently carried them out. But the next place, Tobolsk, is more to my purpose. I had not decided to go there at all, and even if the Governor had known generally of my coming, he could not have been expecting me on the morning of June 2nd, when the floods were out, and necessitated our driving through water up to the axles. In fact, the post-road was at this moment supposed to be impassable ; the Governor himself was waiting, with packed trunks, to accomplish by steamer the reverse journey we had done by road, and one of his first questions was, "How in the world did you get here ?" We asked to see the prisons at once. The police-master was sent for, and in a few minutes we hurried off in vehicles to the prisons. In this case, then, where was time to make things wear a favourable aspect ? Next, at Tomsk, finding I had to wait a week, we took a run of 230 miles to Barnaul, entirely off our road, and not down in my programme. We arrived in the night, and next day stirred up the police-master before he knew, I suspect, of our existence. A third variation from my pre-announced plans was the visit to the Alexandrevsky Prison, near Irkutsk, to which town I thought to go and thence drive out ; but we cut across country instead, and reached the prison at dusk. Here they could hardly have ex-

pected me, for the Vice-Governor wanted to telegraph to the capital for permission to show us the prison, but could not do so because in the fire at Irkutsk the telegraph lines were broken. Yet here I entered in the morning, and went where I liked and saw all I pleased. But, further, supposing for the sake of argument that all had been prepared from Petersburg up to this point, I now altered my plans for the fourth time, in this case radically, and, instead of retracing my steps, went on to the Amur, through the very heart of the convict country. At Chita the supposed expectation of my coming did not by any appearances betray itself. At Kara, indeed, my coming was heralded by telegraph; but on reaching Khabarofka, had I been a hunted hare I could not have more completely doubled upon my pursuers, for, whereas my papers set out that I was going 600 miles south to Vladivostock, the steamer having left, I elected straightway to go 600 miles north to Nikolaefsk, and on my arrival I next morning presented myself to the prison officials.

If, then, after detailing these five changes of plan, the reader still thinks that the Russian authorities managed to keep ahead of me with their messages and telegrams during my five months' journey over 8,000 miles, then I must acknowledge that he has a belief in the foresight and consummate watchfulness of Siberian officials such as I do not possess; and I would ask next, What were the things the Russians did not permit me to see? or, What were the steps they took to "make things wear a favourable aspect"? because, until the aforesaid "Russian informant," or some other, can back up his assertions or suspicions by something like proof, the answer I must give to my friends is this: In certain instances, as at Kansk, Irkutsk, Kara, and Vladivostock—where my visit was definitely expected some hours previously—things may have been made to wear a holiday aspect, so far as

rooms being brushed out and dust removed, with an extra wash and so forth ; but in many cases, notably at Tiumen, Tobolsk, Tomsk, Barnaul, Krasnoiarsk, Chita, and Nikolaefsk, there was not time between my arrival at the town, or the presentation of my credentials and the moment of my admittance to the prisons, to allow even for this ; and in no case could I honestly say that I have reason to suspect things were made to simulate for me a deceitful appearance.

But what do my friends say who live in Russia and Siberia ? I must not withhold the fact that two of them share the suspicions or prejudices of friends in England. The first says : " I read the book (' *Through Siberia* ') with great interest, and must acknowledge that I found one fault ; that is, I think you give the Russians too much credit." The second is my old host, Captain de Vries, who has now passed away, but a correspondent wrote to me : " During one of my last visits the Captain informed me that though he considered your work '*Through Siberia*' well written, and a correct statement of what you really saw and heard, yet he could not rid himself of the impression that you did not see matters in their everyday aspect ; but that, notwithstanding your avowal in the preface to the contrary, the officials were informed beforehand of your visit, and consequently prepared for your reception."

Another correspondent, however, in Siberia speaks differently ; and a Swede living in Russia says : " I have read your '*Through Siberia*' with deep interest, and can only say that I never read anything so fair and impartial printed in the English language relating to matters in Russia. Ever since the Crimean War, I have seen matters relating to Russia grossly misrepresented in the English press and in English books, and always felt sorry ; for surely it is not creditable to a great nation (to say the least) to

deviate from the plain truth in speaking about others. As far as my own experience goes, there may be many things said respecting a wide field for improvement here, but from general experience I can testify that I always have seen prisoners in Russia treated with much kindness by officials as well as the public at large. At the time of the last rising in Poland in 1862-3-4, I served as locomotive superintendent on Moscow-Nijny railway. As may be supposed, feeling ran high, but I never saw a single act of unkindness against any of the Polish prisoners, who were carried on the Nijny railway in large numbers at the time in question. Nor have I ever since seen any prisoner treated anything but well—sometimes even, according to my notion, too well; that is to say, the prisoner has got less work, more food, more clothing, and better lodgings, than many a free man can get by his labour, and often enough the prisoner has experienced more kindness at the hands of prison officials, than the free man from his employers." These testimonies, then, wholly unsought by me, I leave to speak for themselves.

Besides the suspicions of friends, however, I have been confronted with the Siberian chapter in the story of "Called Back," by "Hugh Conway," and have been asked how that tallies with *my* account. Here-upon I would first inquire, Is the story fiction or fact? As fiction, I have little to say to the novel, except that the author has not learned his lesson perfectly. When, however, he says, "I expect to be believed. . . . All else save this one thing I could prove to be true," does the author wish his readers to understand that he really went to Siberia and saw the facts he records? If so, then I detect in "Called Back" another of the series of apocryphal books on that much-abused country, and can only regret that the popular tale will "carry the lie round the world, while Truth is putting on her boots." Still, I have

no intention of charging the author with deliberate misrepresentation. He dipped his brush in colours which I can well conceive he thought might be true, and I fail to see in him the *animus* which certain Russian writers betray.*

* Will the reader be good enough to judge the grounds of my adverse judgment? The hero of "Called Back" goes to Siberia in search of a prisoner, and on arriving at Petersburg he says: "We received a passport authorizing me to travel to the end of the Czar's Asiatic dominions if I thought fit, which was worded in such a way that it obviated the necessity of obtaining a fresh passport wherever a fresh government district was to be traversed." Again, "All convicts were first sent to Tobolsk. . . . whence they were drafted off at the pleasure of the Governor-General to various places. . . . If I wished, the Governor of Tobolsk should be telegraphed to; but as I was bound any way to go to that town, it would be just as well if I made my inquiries in person"; and it was at Tobolsk the author expected to "await the pleasure of the Governor-General." Now here is a small pickle of mistakes to begin with! For, a *passport* does not entitle the holder to travel by post, but a *podorojna*, which gives a claim to horses between two points; but it is immaterial whether, in reaching one's destination, the traveller passes through one government or half-a-dozen. Next, all convicts are *not* distributed from Tobolsk, but from Tiumen. It is here the author should have gone to make his imaginary inquiries, and then he would not have been "bound any way to go to Tobolsk," but could have driven direct to Tomsk. Besides this, the Governor-General did not live at Tobolsk, but 700 miles distant at Omsk! Next, our author's geography is somewhat faulty, as is his knowledge of posting customs. He says: "A trifle of some 400 miles from Ekaterineburg to Tiumen" (this should be 204), and "at the east bank of the Irtysh, Siberia proper begins" (this is wrong by 150 miles). Then he speeds on so fast that he "left the *yemstchik* no time for refreshment." But why should he? Does he think that the *yemstchik*, like an interpreter, accompanies one all the way, or has he to learn that he merely drives the traveller to the next station, perhaps an hour's run, and then goes back with his horses? But a sentence most damaging to "Called Back" as an authority on Siberian affairs is this: "We passed many gangs of convicts plodding along to their fate. Ivan told me that most of them were in chains. This I should not have noticed, as the irons are only on the legs and worn under the trousers." Now, I have seen scores, not to say hundreds, of Russian leg-chains, and I have a pair, with a prison suit, in my own possession. I put them on and was photographed, and the illustration in "Through Siberia," p. 155, of "Convict Summer Clothing and Chains," represents "your humble servant" in all but the features. From this picture it will be seen that the chain, 30 inches long, fastened to each ankle, *could not* be worn under the trousers. Yet our humane author adds, "Poor wretched beings, my heart ached for them!" And so, doubtless, has that of many of his readers—especially ladies—but quite needlessly, for these chains worn under the trousers are but a hoax.

I now proceed to the articles of Prince Krapotkine,* who permitted himself to say that, concerning gaols and convicts, "Through Siberia" could only convey false ideas; and whose testimony has been set against mine. How, then, stands the matter? Prince Krapotkine gets his information from three sources, and so do I: from what he sees, what he hears, and what he reads. As regards the last, I at once yield to him, as better able to inform the public than I, since he writes of his own country, and from books in his own language. When, however, we come to testimony from seeing and hearing, things are not quite the same. My critic, as far as I understand, has seen the inside of two prisons in Petersburg. I have

* I am indebted for information concerning Prince Krapotkine to "Stepniak," formerly editor of a Russian revolutionary paper, who, in "Underground Russia," gives a slight sketch of "Peter Krapotkine," to the effect that, having been educated at the College of the Pages, he went, in 1861, to Siberia to study its geology. (I have seen two pamphlets, which I presume to be the outcome of that journey.) Ten years later he travelled in Belgium and Switzerland, and (says "Stepniak") "became an internationalist, and adopted the ideas of the most extreme party, the so-called anarchical party, of which he has always remained a fervent champion." In 1872 he was admitted to the Russian revolutionary circle, and "entrusted with the duty of drawing up the programme of the party and its organization, which was afterwards found among his papers." In the winter of 1872 he commenced his secret lectures, was arrested, and confined for three years in the fortress prison. Then he was removed, according to his own account, for three months to the "House of Detention at Petersburg" before his transfer to the military hospital. In a few months (says "Stepniak") his health was re-established, but he did everything in his power to hide the fact. He induced those in charge of him always to believe him to be *in extremis*, etc. (p. 162). He walked with the step of a dying man: he spoke in a low voice, as if merely to open the mouth were a painful effort. The doctor ordered him frequent exercise; when one fine day in July, the gates of the yard being open for laying in wood, he suddenly takes to his heels, leaps into a carriage prepared by his friends, and leaves behind the sentinel, and the officer tearing his hair and exclaiming that he is ruined. Thus much from "Stepniak"; except that he says, "Peter Krapotkine is one of the most sincere and frank of men: he always says the truth pure and simple, without any regard for the *amour propre* of his hearers, or for any consideration whatever. This is the most striking and sympathetic feature of his character. Every word he says may be absolutely believed. . . . This absolute sincerity renders him the best of friends, and gives especial weight to his praise or blame."

seen more than twenty times two, all over the Empire ; and although, if I had as a visitor seen ten times this number, it would not make my testimony *upon certain things* so valuable as his, yet upon some things it ought to be a great deal better. It stands to reason that, upon such matters as the conduct of the turnkeys towards prisoners, and the various details of prison life and discipline that do not meet a visitor's eye, my testimony is as nothing compared with that of a prisoner, and I willingly yield precedence to my critic. But "one need not eat a whole leg of mutton to know how it tastes," and one need not be in a prison a month to know whether the rooms are large or small, crowded or empty, light or dark, airy or close, lately whitewashed or bedaubed with dirt, apparently dry or fungus covered ; and it is precisely to this class of facts I have professed to bear witness. Not one of my alleged facts, however, so far as I know, has been disproved ; but horrible pictures have been drawn by " P. Krapotkine," in the *Nineteenth Century*,* and by others, of certain prisons, which for the most part I have not visited, and so cannot contradict from personal testimony, except perhaps in the case of the fortress prison in Petersburg, to the description of which I now invite the reader's attention, and notice certain other objections in passing.

* January, June, and December, 1883, and March, 1884

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FORTRESS PRISON IN PETERSBURG.

Difficulty of obtaining admittance, and facility of misrepresentation.—Letter alleged to have been written therefrom in blood.—Description of Troubetzkoy Bastion: its cells, occupants, and diet.—The Courtine of Catherine II.—Place for visits of friends, and for trials.—The library.—Cells for military officers, and garden.—Inquiry for *oubliettes* and underground dungeons.—Testimony of official eye-witnesses.—Testimony of ex-prisoners.—Examination of statements in the *Nineteenth Century*.—Insufficient evidence as to alleged torture of prisoners.

THE prison for political offenders in the fortress of SS. Peter and Paul at Petersburg has long been an exhaustless mine for the horror-monger, whose delineations found, at any rate until quite recently, negative support in the extreme jealousy of the authorities of any investigation by outsiders.

I asked to see this particular prison or the one at Schlüsselburg (I forget which), in 1878, but was denied. When, however, in 1882, I found the authorities willing to grant me all I desired with regard to Central Asia, I made bold to ask Count Tolstoy, the Minister of the Interior, whether I might not also be allowed to visit the State prison in the fortress. His Excellency had kindly assured me that he would do everything for me that he could; but, on receiving this request, I fancied he winced a little, and at first said "No." I urged, however, that the enemies of Russia, and those who would rather not hear any good

of her, had said that in my inspection of Siberian prisons the worst had not been shown me; also that in the fortress prison abominations were commonly alleged to exist, which I could not gainsay so long as I had not personally inspected the building. This seemed to "fetch" the Count, who told me I might come on the following Saturday for a "Yes" or "No"; the reason for the delay being, I afterwards heard, that on the Friday the Minister intended to submit my application to the Emperor. I went on the Saturday morning, and was told that I *might see everything*, and choose my own time to do so. I elected to go within a very few hours—on the afternoon of the same day—being not unmindful of what had been said about prisons being prepared for me. As a Russian gentleman, who had accompanied me in the city to interpret, fought shy of going with me to the prison, lest it should in any way bring him under suspicion, the police-master spared me his secretary. Thus prepared, I went to the fortress, was introduced to the Commandant, General Ganetzky, one of the heroes of Plevna, and then, accompanied by the secretary of the fortress and the governor of the prison, proceeded to my inspection. I described my visit in the *Contemporary Review* for February, 1883, and the contribution was adversely criticised in the following June number of the *Nineteenth Century*, by Prince Krapotkine, whilst in the *Times* of the next December 7th there appeared a communication respecting the Troubetzkoy Bastion in the fortress prison, and its horrors, of the most startling character. As I read the letter, less than a column long, pencil in hand, I marked no less than 38 places that seemed to me errors, misrepresentations, exaggerations, or doubtful passages; whilst, from certain discrepancies between the writer's statements, and what I myself saw, and was told by two ex-prisoners from the fortress, I strongly suspected

that the correspondent had not been confined in the fortress at all. I wrote to the *Times* to say so, but the late editor did not insert my letter, though I happen to know that from the first he had some doubt whether the affair were not a hoax. Perhaps it was well that my strictures did not appear, for the unanswered allegations led an "Englishman" (whom I shall so designate hereafter) to visit the Troubetzkoy Bastion, and to write afterwards to the *Pall Mall Gazette* of 13th February, 1884. He said that the letter was well known to the police in Petersburg, and had been written—not from the fortress in blood, but—in red ink at Geneva. Thus I have the testimony of the "Englishman" to confirm my own observations, and to assist me in my passing remarks on what Prince Krapotkine and the letter writer have said.

Two buildings within the fortress walls now serve as prisons—the "Troubetzkoy Bastion," and the "Courtine of Catherine II." The Troubetzkoy prison consists of 72 cells, in two stories, built or arranged in their present form about 1870. The windows of the cells look out on to the outer fortress wall, from which the building is separated by a court about 20 feet wide. The doors of the cells open in one wall of a wide passage, down the centre of which lies a piece of matting, deadening the footsteps of passers-by. As we entered the passage, a hush was called (I suppose in order that the nearest prisoner might not be aware of our presence), and the cover of an inspection hole was gently raised that I might look within. The name, too, of the occupant was given me, it being none other than that of the man who took a shop and made a mine under one of the streets of Petersburg with the diabolical design of blowing up the late Emperor. Of course I peeped breathlessly in, and duly prepared my nerves to see how this arch offender was being treated, and what likelihood there seemed of his losing his health, or reason, or of sinking into

the ghastly condition of political prisoners as described in the *Nineteenth Century*. But the man appeared to be bearing his fate better than was to be expected. He seemed to be in good health, and showed not the least tendency to insanity. In fact, he was lying at full length on his bed, with his toes in the air, reading a book, and smoking a cigar!

I was not invited, and I did not ask, to enter the compartment, but passed on to an adjoining and similar cell, to examine it minutely. It measured (roughly) 23 feet long by 11 broad and 10 high. The window was not of ground or corrugated glass, but was too high to allow of the prisoner looking out. It was large enough to admit a sufficiency of light by day, and all through the winter nights there was kept burning, not a miserable rushlight, but a good oil lamp, such as I have never seen in a prison before or since. There was a supply of water, with a drinking cup, and a salt-cellar; and the sanitary arrangements, though not quite up to the present standard, would have passed muster at the time the cells were constructed. The floor was of asphalte; and the room was warmed by a *petchka* or stove, and ventilated; was fitted with an air bell, and had in it an iron table and bedstead. On the latter was placed first a mattress of straw, then one of flock, with two *feather* pillows, such as I have never seen provided in any other prison.

The diet was represented to be as follows: dinner at 1 o'clock, consisting of two courses—the first, *stchee*, or soup, in which by law 1 lb. of meat for each prisoner must have been boiled; the second, a plate of roast meat with potatoes, and fresh vegetables when plentiful. For supper, soup only is provided, and there is given to each prisoner daily $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of rye bread. This allowance of bread struck me as small compared with that of other Russian prisons, and I said so; but the secretary replied that most of the fortress prisoners

either had money with which they bought white bread, or friends who brought it, with other kinds of food; and further, that if the allowance were not enough, the prisoners had only to ask for more, to get it. Also they might purchase extras, and I noticed, in almost every cell I looked into, a box of cigarettes. Smoking, they said, was forbidden by law, but the Commandant might allow it.

Prisoners awaiting their trial could receive visits from friends for half an hour once a fortnight, or oftener if the friends coming from a distance remained only a short time at the capital; but, when sentenced, a man could receive no more visits from friends until he had left the fortress and arrived at his place of destination. For those who needed it, there was provided a suit of coarse linen and a loose coat, but most of those detained in the fortress wore their own clothes. There was a bath-house visited by the prisoners once a month, or oftener if they wish, and there were shown me certain ordinary cells that could be darkened for punishment.

Behind the building was a garden used for exercise, of which, however, each prisoner, at the time of my visit, had only a scanty allowance—sometimes not more than 20 minutes a day. I thought this bad, and said so, but was told that only one prisoner at a time was allowed to be in the garden, and that there were then from 30 to 40 to exercise daily. This is noteworthy because the letter writer says that in taking exercise the prisoners walk “in Indian file.”

In the lower story women were detained. I looked through an inspection hole at one of forbidding countenance, who was reading. She had been captured only a few days previously among a gang of Nihilists, whose *rendez-vous* had been discovered not far distant on the Vassili Ostroff. As I went along the passages I looked into what cells I pleased, and if I asked the names of the occupants they were given.

After walking through the Troubetzkoy Bastion, and seeing as much as I wished, we proceeded to the Courtine of Catherine II. close by. I suppose this to be the *proper* name of this part of the building, but it has occurred to me that its cells or rooms are what several writers have called the "Underground casemates" of the fortress. At least I saw no other parts of the building that agreed with this expression. Webster describes a casemate as a "bomb-proof chamber, usually of masonry, in which cannon may be placed, to be fired through embrasures; or capable of being used as a magazine, or for quartering troops," and the French dictionary describes a "courtine" as "a wall between two bastions." Both these descriptions agree with the Courtine of Catherine II., and the casemates are in a sense "underground," in that earth is put on the roofs to make them bomb-proof, or again as the London high-level railway arches with ballast on the top might by an abuse of language be called "underground." In fact, the interior of one of the cells with rounded roof reminded me exactly of a London railway arch turned into a store-room, with the floor a few feet below the springers. The embrasures had no cannon, but were glazed, and the windows, with several feet of scarped wall below, looked out on a garden and over the Neva. I did not measure the rooms. but they struck me as larger than those in the Troubetzkoy Bastion, and I observed no damp on the walls. The rooms below, I was given to understand, are no longer used as cells; though I observe that "Englishman" speaks of the bottom of these walls as damp, and says that the lower part of the prison is used only when the 72 cells of the Troubetzkoy Bastion are full. They have usually from 20 to 40 prisoners. At the time of my visit there were 38.

We entered first the place in which prisoners see their friends, behind wire grating as in other prisons,

but with square apertures larger than usual, through which prisoner and friend could see each other clearly, and pass commodities in the presence of an officer. A couch and cane-bottomed chairs were provided for friends and prisoner alike, and the place looked somewhat less gloomy than in many prisons. Further on, however, was a chamber that called up ideas anything but pleasant. It was a large room, with low vaulted roof, in which commissioners formerly sat to conduct trials, commencing to do so in 1861. Some celebrated trials in 1866, I was informed, were conducted here; but the chamber, after serving this purpose for 12 years, ceased to be used, though it is still to some extent furnished. As at Newgate, the accused could be brought from their cells to the place of judgment without going outside the prison gates. Beyond this hall of judgment was the library, which I could not enter, as the librarian was away. It was said to contain from 600 to 700 volumes in Russian, French, German, and English. The prisoners, I was told, read a great deal—indeed, I saw many so doing. A copy of the Gospels or of the New Testament is placed in every room, and the library books may be had for the asking. Periodicals and newspapers are also provided, but not less than a year old, the authorities not thinking it desirable that persons awaiting their trial should see themselves figuring in print. Should new books, however, be required, of a scientific, technical, or otherwise unobjectionable character, they are allowed.*

The prisoners' rooms in the Courtine were not numerous, though there were other unused chambers *en suite*. The men confined in this part were chiefly, if not entirely, military officers, the Russian code prescribing that certain military offences (not neces-

* Yet the letter writer "in blood" says, "Worst of all, there are no books, no paper,—there is absolutely nothing to do: nothing to relieve the complete solitude and silence; even the Bible is denied them."

sarily political) should be expiated by imprisonment in a *fortress* for a period not exceeding three years and three months. There were six chambers for ordinary prisoners, and also three very large rooms for those condemned to death, with whom are placed two warders (as in England) from the day on which sentence is passed to the hour of execution. There was no one in the fortress condemned to death at the time of my visit, but I entered one of the rooms, and then proceeded to the cell (if such it could be called) of an officer sentenced to four months' confinement. The room was furnished with Vienna chairs, had a bouquet of flowers on the table-cloth, and contained, among other things that attracted my attention, a neat carpenter's bench, and an amateur's box of tools. None of the fortress prisoners are obliged to work, but this officer chose to employ his time in making fancy and fretwork articles, specimens of which were seen about the room.

The prisoners in the Courtine had a less unpleasant time than their comrades in the Troubetzkoy Bastion with regard to exercise, for they could, if they chose, spend the greater part of the summer day (from noon to eight) in the garden, and that in company of one another. I walked round the enclosure, which commands a splendid view of the Neva, and was fairly taken aback by what I saw. There was no lack of flowers (tended, I believe, by the prisoners), and an abundance of shady trees, between two of which a hammock was swung, whilst not far off were a pair of gymnastic bars, a summer-house, and a tent. The animal world was represented by a goat cropping the grass, and two playful puppies belonging to some officers, who, in a knot of four, were lounging about under no *visible* surveillance. In the garden, in one place which was damp, there was an offensive smell, but I detected nothing of the kind elsewhere.

Need I add that I saw no torture-chamber, or any

similar abomination? What, then, can have become of the "*cachots*," "*oubliettes*," and dismal chambers which have been connected with the "Peter and Paul" by so many, and by some, too, whose testimony is worthy of respectful consideration? I do not allude to the exaggerated and vindictive expressions of released prisoners, who overreach their aim when they vilify the place of their punishment; nor to the stories of the Great Peter's days that have descended from father to son, and been questioned by neither though garnished by both. I am thinking rather of the testimony of such men as the Decembrists, one of whom told me that not he, but one of his comrades, was confined for many years in the fortress in a *cachot*; and another, writing an account, which still exists in manuscript, of his exile, for his wife and children, describes his cell at the fortress at Petersburg as "very small, dirty, and dark." I can only reconcile these statements with what I saw by one of two suggestions. It will be remembered that the insurrection of the Decembrists took place in 1825, in December (whence their name), and that not a mere handful of assassins, but whole regiments led by their officers, attempted to deprive the Emperor Nicholas of his throne. The number of persons arrested must therefore have been very great, and the fortress may well have been overfilled, so that every possible corner would have to be occupied; and if one remembers what our own prisons in England were half a century ago, it need not seem surprising if some at least of the places of detention in the fortress could be described as "dark, dirty, and small." The occasion and the number of the prisoners was abnormal and temporary, and the then exceptional condition of things ought not, without additional proof, to be brought forward as representing the condition of things now.

The other suggestion is that a part of the fortress now altered or taken down may have contained these

gloomy places. More than one of those whom I told of my visit asked if I had seen the "Alexeievsky Ravelin," and upon my replying in the negative, they said that a third prison of the fortress had not been shown me. But an official, high in the prison administration, and whom I have known for some time, told me, a day or two before I went, that the part of the fortress in the thick wall of which cells were long ago formed, is no longer used as a prison, and that the cells are abolished. I expressly asked, when going over the buildings, if there were any subterranean chambers or cells, and was told "No." Inasmuch, then, as I have not yet detected the Russian prison authorities on any one occasion trying to deceive me, I am bound to believe what they say, until someone can show proof to the contrary. If anyone denied to me that there were dark cells in Newgate I could in six lines give so minute a direction that a Russian entering the prison for the first time should be able to find them; but for anyone to say, like the "blood-red" letter writer, that there are in the fortress "underground cells where a ray of sunlight never enters, where offensive water oozes through the walls, and fungus grows on all sides," is not sufficiently definite as to locality. Prince Krapotkine, after speaking of the Troubetzkoy Bastion, says: "The floor of the cells is covered with a painted felt, and the walls are made double with felt to prevent the prisoners from speaking to one another by tapping,"—a very proper device of the authorities if it were so, but it was not the case in the cells I entered or looked into. Again, he says that the prisoners I saw were awaiting trial, and that it is after trial that they are put into the horrible places he describes; but his testimony fails to convince me because he does not sufficiently particularize the locality of the cells so that an independent person might test the accuracy of his statements.

So much, then, for what I saw; and, had I left Russia immediately after my visit, this is all I could have said;

but, as I continued my journey, I met here and there persons who knew the fortress, and with whom I could compare notes. So contradictory to current opinion on the subject was my experience, that with a view to publication I wrote a short paper, and read it to several Russians, including a legal gentleman who had held a prominent position in the "third section," and who on one occasion, summoned by telegram, went to the fortress to receive from a noted offender some statement he wished to make. My informant told me that he went to the Alexeievsky Ravelin, out of which, he said, prisoners did not come without permission of the Emperor. He descended to cells underground, which were large and airy, but lighted from the corridor above, hardly enough, he said, to read, though the prisoner might call for a lamp. This was about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, but whether winter or summer I know not; if the former, then the deficiency of light at that time of day in Petersburg would easily be accounted for, and it also leaves room for doubt whether the lawyer may not have been mistaken as to the cells being underground. This was the only time he visited the prison, and I suggest the possibility of his being mistaken, because the position of the cells does not agree with what was told me further on, by a chief of gendarmerie, whom I met at dinner, who knew the fortress, and said there used to be a part of the building, of three stories, called the Alexeievsky Ravelin, but he knew nothing of cells underground. "*Oubliettes*," he thought, had not been in use since the days of the Emperor Paul, and he did not believe in the torture of prisoners in the fortress now.

But besides the testimony of these two witnesses I met other two, who had been confined in the fortress. Both of them are now filling important positions, are highly respected, and no one, or almost no one, about them has any idea of their having been in prison. Of course, therefore, I cannot give their names; but I

shall call them Messrs. Jones and Robinson. Mr. Jones, who is a British subject, had the misfortune to fall under the suspicion of the authorities, through being found in the same lodgings with a political miscreant. Accordingly, about 1866, he was taken one night from a restaurant by the police, placed on a droshky, hurried off, and lodged in the fortress. The next morning a clerk came and asked him sundry questions, and among others whether he knew where he was. The clerk, however, declined to answer, in turn, any questions put by the prisoner, who asked in vain for books, though he was allowed to have pens, ink, and paper. His food, he told me, was good, but he had no white bread or tea. He was not allowed to smoke, or send out for cigars. When necessity required him to leave his cell, he was taken out and brought back by gendarmes, but during the few days he was in prison he was not let out for exercise. I asked him about "torture," but he said that no violence was used towards him, though a friend of his, confined in 1866, had told him that during his examination he was switched with a rod as punishment, but not with a view to extort confession. On the fifth day my informant was taken to the arched chamber for examination, and, while waiting in the ante-room, heard another prisoner inside swearing and stamping with rage. His own examination lasted about a quarter of an hour, and on the seventh day he was whisked out of prison, much in the fashion he had been brought in, at 1 o'clock in the morning.

I pass now to the testimony of Mr. Robinson, a Russian, in whose presence I had been speaking of my visit to the fortress, when he called me aside and said, "You will be surprised, perhaps, to hear that I know the fortress. No one in this town is aware of it, but 20 years ago I was imprisoned there, on political charges, for three years." A revolutionary correspondent, he told me, had written to him, proposing that he should be chief commissioner for a certain city, for the

distribution of revolutionary publications, that the letter had been opened and he had been arrested on the strength of it. Accordingly I made an appointment to see him in private, and on my not arriving quite so early as he expected, he busied himself in making a pen-and-ink sketch, which is now in my possession, of his cell in the Alexeievsky Ravelin. It was furnished with table, chair, commode (taken away immediately after use and cleaned by a soldier), and a bed, with two feather pillows, a pair of sheets, blanket, and woollen coverlet. The cell measured 18 feet 8 inches long, by 16 feet 4 inches broad, and 9 feet 4 inches high. The window was nearly 7 feet high, and doubled in winter; the two lower sashes being whitewashed, but not so the top, out of which the prisoner could look by standing up. The room was yellowwashed and painted once a year, during which operation its occupant was removed at various times to four or five other cells like his own. The painted floor was washed once a week, but not by the prisoner. He said he had no trouble about his room, for at half-past seven a.m. four soldiers entered his cell. One poured water in Russian fashion on Mr. Robinson's hands, and another held his comb, whilst the remaining two cleaned the room. This sort of attendance was continued at the bath, visited once a fortnight, where the soldiers waited on him, even to putting on his socks. He wore the prison clothes, including a grey flannel dressing-gown (or *khalat*), and had clean linen for bed and back once a week. At eight o'clock there was brought a glass of tea, sugar, and white bread. Dinner followed at one, consisting ordinarily of three dishes, but in Easter week of four, preceded, if he chose, by a glass of vodka, or spirits. The first dish was of soup, with the beef, veal, or chicken of which it had been made; the second was of roast beef, fowl, or game, but so varied that the same second dish did not appear twice in any week during the whole three years he was there. The third dish

was of rice pudding, buckwheat, jam pancakes, etc., etc., the portions, always well cooked, being so large that he could not eat the whole. At six o'clock came again tea, sugar, and white bread, black bread being served only for dinner. After making notes of this, and that he might if he chose purchase extras, I was fully prepared to hear Mr. Robinson say that at the end of three years he left the fortress heavier by 30 lbs. Russian than he entered, his former weight being 144 lbs. English. He said that he was in solitary confinement, but that a captain came almost daily to ask if he had complaints to make, which complaints when set forth were duly attended to. The Commandant of the fortress came once a month; and once a year also a special messenger (chief of the gendarmerie) from the Emperor. Mr. Robinson spoke of the prison officers as even "polite," and said that the chief (when not drunk!) used often to come and talk for an hour. Again, that on one occasion Mezentseff (chief of the secret police, who was murdered by the Nihilists in 1879) asked him if he would like to smoke, in which case he should be supplied with a $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of tobacco for cigarettes every other day. He also asked if he would like to paint or write; and books from the library and drawing materials were brought to him. It was in this fortress prison, he said, that he read "Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."

This testimony of Mr. Robinson is in striking contrast to the article to which I have called attention, saying that in the Ravelin was disallowed "everything that might help to occupy the attention," for here was written the Russian novel, *Tchto Dyealit?* ("What's to be Done?"), published in 1863 in the *Sovremennik* (or *Contemporary*). Mr. Robinson told me that Tchernichevsky, the author, was with him in the Ravelin, and wrote it there. So that Tchernichevsky's mind did not "decay" for want of occupation. Mr. Robinson said that he never heard or saw anything corroborative

of prisoners being tortured in the fortress. I have heard of prisoners being fed with salt herrings, and without water to drink. Prince Krapotkine, too, asserts that at least two revolutionists were submitted to torture by electricity. But he declines to give any particulars to support his statement. When persons have told me of such things I used to ask the question, "Out of the hundreds of prisoners who have passed through the fortress, do you know of one who has asserted that he was put to torture?" and an affirmative answer has not yet been forthcoming. If torture in the fortress is inflicted, can no one be found to tell us with some closeness of detail *when*, *where*, and *how* he was made to suffer? Such things, if done, could not well have been hid. Further, Robinson had a friend who had been four times in the fortress, and many other acquaintances likely to know the truth, but none of these had ever spoken to him of cruelties enacted there.

I have no information respecting sickness, deaths, or insanity in the fortress. During Robinson's three years' confinement two prisoners went mad through their own fault and secret sin. But the writer of the apocryphal letter perpetrates a strange anachronism when he says, "Even those who become mad are not treated any better. They are strapped down and beaten with the knout." Now, I am informed by a Russian nobleman, that the knout was not at any time used as an instrument of correction in prisons, but in place of capital punishment. But, however this may be, the "knout" proper (which is the Russian word for a whip) was abolished so long ago that I have been unable to get one for my collection of prison curiosities, and it was with great difficulty, when writing "*Through Siberia*," that I found an old man who could describe what it used to be like.

I have no recollection of seeing any chapel in the prison, though of course there is the well-known

church close at hand within the fortress wall. Mr. Robinson did not go to church during his imprisonment, but a priest came thrice a year, and administered the sacrament once. On these occasions the prisoners learned from him something of what was going on in the outer world. Otherwise my informant said that for the first nine months he was not allowed to see any of his relations, and, even then, only his father, mother, and sister, in the cabinet of the Commandant.

The reader will have perceived, of course, that the above statements respecting the visits of friends, and the rich table of diet in the case of Mr. Robinson, do not agree with what came under my own notice in the prison itself. I do not think it necessary to attempt to reconcile the two accounts, but content myself with having given a faithful record of what I saw and heard, having extenuated nothing, nor set down aught in malice. Whether or not what I have said in "Through Siberia," on Siberian convicts and gaols, "can only convey false ideas" I must leave to those best qualified to judge, begging them to remember that what I am committed to is simply an "unprejudiced statement of what I saw and heard in the prisons and mines of Siberia."

Around that word "unprejudiced" I suspect the remaining contention gathers, for Prince Krapotkine and I do not see things from the same standpoint. My critic calls some of his prisoner friends "heroes," which is a synonym for Nihilists I could by no means accept, nor could I receive his doctrines enunciated in the *Nineteenth Century* (January, 1883). "The principle of the *lex talionis*, of the right of the community to avenge itself on the criminal, is no longer admissible. We have come to an understanding that society at large is responsible for the vices that grow in it, even as it has its share in the glories of its heroes; and we generally admit, at least in theory, that when we deprive a criminal of his liberty, it is to purify and

improve him." This, however true and excellent in the abstract, must, when interpreted by Nihilistic events, be taken to mean that when a dynamitard, for instance, has made a mine and blown a score or two of Cossacks into eternity, or wrecked a train, in which some individual *may* be, whose murder is decreed, the perpetrator is not on that account to be made to endure suffering as such, but to be compassionately patted on the back, and segregated to apartments where under more favourable conditions he may be purified and improved. A comfortable doctrine truly, but one not likely to find favour among the Cossacks' widows and orphans, or the maimed and mangled passengers! The fallacy of so pernicious a principle is self-evident, and there are few who would not say that such a criminal, irrespective of his future improvement, deserved to suffer severely, whether acting for himself, or urged on by others to his dastardly work.*

There is room, no doubt, for difference of opinion as

* I know not who the Englishman may be who went to the fortress prison, and wrote to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, but he says: "I inquired into the history of many (of the prisoners) I there saw, especially of the women. It was the same sad story. Few had finished their education anywhere; some had been to several gymnasia, and had been forced to leave, either through insubordination, idleness, or intellectual incapacity. At war with the school authorities, often smarting under a sense of injustice real or supposed, they leave school at war with whatever they have known of law and of authority. Thus predisposed, they fall a ready victim to men of far more experience than themselves, who, by appealing to the daring, the enthusiasm, the courage of youth, urge them on to deeds they dare not do themselves. Most of the young women entangled in the fatal net of Nihilism were but inexperienced children when they first began. Many young girls sent to Switzerland for their education were sedulously sought after by the Nihilist refugees there. Appeals to their love of country, their enthusiasm, their youthful longing to be something—to do—were but too successful; and young girls, at the very outset of their careers, find themselves bound by oaths, to be broken at the risk of sudden and secret death should their courage fail, or should they hesitate to obey. Here lies the real and ruthless tyranny; and the cowardly plotters, safe, skulking in some foreign land, are alone responsible. One reads with a feeling of loathing and disgust an appeal to humanity from such cowardly assassins. The heart throbs with pity for their inexperienced and too credulous dupes; but one boils with contempt and loathing at the very thought of these vanity mad, cowardly misleaders."

to what should be done to this class of offenders when caught, how the majesty of the law should be vindicated, the body politic protected, and the criminal reformed. For my own part, though it is not a pretty sight to see a man's back bared and a couple of soldiers birching him, yet I never asked a prison official in England—whether governor, turnkey, or chaplain—who did not agree with me that, if we had far more of this mode of punishment than we now have, we should have far fewer of a certain class of criminals. I still believe in the wisdom of the code that directed judges to justify the righteous and condemn the wicked; and if the wicked man were worthy to be beaten, that the judge should cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, though not without mercy, lest the offender should be made vile.*

In concluding this chapter, then, let me restate what I said in my preface to "*Through Siberia*," concerning the prisons and penal institutions of that country, namely, that "much has been written concerning them which is very unsatisfactory, and some things that are absolutely false."† This I still maintain, but by no means thereby imply that more cannot be correctly said in their disfavour than I have noticed. I have never maintained that Russian prisons are what they ought to be. I do not believe they are what they might be, and I am sure they are not what those highest in authority would like them to be; but all this does not justify the representation of them to be what they are not.

* Deut. xxxi. 3.

† I added, "One author published '*My Exile in Siberia*' who never went there"; and to this Prince Krapotkine has taken strong exception, saying that the words "in Siberia" were added by the publishers, and not by Hertzen, the author. I wrote to the publishers, but the partner through whose hands the transaction passed is no longer living, and the firm cannot find any record upon the subject. It does not materially affect the truth, however, of what I said, though, if the statement about the publishers be true, it is, of course, a pity that an author should thus be laid open to suspicion he does not deserve, and I therefore recall the sentence, giving him the benefit of the doubt.

Had a pamphlet been put forth saying that Russian prisons are the best in the world, that there is not a speck of dirt to be found in one of them, that every prisoner therein is as well employed as those in the prisons of London, Paris, or Breslau, that the efforts for their moral and spiritual welfare are better even than they were in Newgate—a string of superlatives, in fact—I should have declared that they were utterly untrue; and then I can imagine myself being regarded as a detractor, as some would now make me a defender, of Russian prisons, whereas I disclaim to be regarded as one or the other. If readers have drawn the conclusion from anything that I have written or said, that I thought Russian prisons in general needed no improvement and no reform, then I have been altogether misunderstood, and I hasten to say that there is abundance of room for both. But having now, as I hope, justified my position with reference to what I said of the prisons of Siberia, and related what I know of the fortress prison in Petersburg, I shall change the venue and relate what I saw of the prisons of Russian Central Asia.



CHAPTER XXII.

THE PRISONS OF RUSSIAN CENTRAL ASIA.

Visit to prison at Omsk.—Difficulties in providing prisoners with literature.—Exaggerated statements as to uncleanness of Russian prisons.—Visit to prison at Semipolatsinsk.—A Raskolnik fanatic.—Criminal statistics of Semipolatsinsk.—Visit to prison at Vierny.—Official report of the prisons of Semirechia.—Local voluntary committees.—My distribution of books.—Visit to prison at Tashkend.—Alleged overcrowding of Russian prisons.—Visit to prison at Khokand.—Prison visitation in Samarkand.—Lavatory arrangements, and misrepresentations concerning them.—My testimony and its limits.

THE visitation of prisons and hospitals was a principal object that took me to Central Asia, just as three years previously it had led me to visit Siberia. Accordingly I thought it better to devote a chapter to this subject than to interrupt the narrative of the journey by detailed descriptions *en route*.

The first prison we visited was in the suburbs of Omsk, a building of dazzling whiteness, both without and within, with accommodation for 240 prisoners; but the average number of 135 on its books. There were 22 rooms for ordinary use, a hospital with 5 rooms more, and 15 cells. The two punishment cells were dark, or could be darkened (I forget which), but not with the Egyptian darkness that reigns in the punishment cells of Newgate. I never saw anything to equal that in any prison of Russia or Siberia. As we entered room after room I inquired how many of

the occupants could read. Out of 9 men in one ward, 2 could read; in another, 3 out of 4; in a third, 2 out of 4; but in the next chamber not 1 out of 7. These last were all Kirghese, of whom one had had his nose bitten off in a quarrel. Another room contained 15 women, none of whom, if I remember rightly, could read. There were in the building, at the time of our visit, 17 women and 2 children; but the average number of women is 8. The daily allowance to the prisoners was $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. (Russian) of bread, and $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of meat. This latter, I presume, is withheld on fast days, but on feast days it is increased to $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. They have soup, and on Thursdays and Sundays porridge, besides buckwheat or barley gruel.

The church in the building was attended by the prisoners on Sundays and the great feasts, as was the Roman chapel by the two prisoners of this creed then in prison. In 1879 I sent to General Kaznakoff, then Governor-General of Western Siberia, upwards of 300 New Testaments, Gospels, and Psalms, also a large number of tracts and pamphlets for the hospitals, prisons and schools of the provinces of Akmolinsk and Semipolatsk, and we found in this prison at Omsk what looked like a portion of the gift, but they were in a cupboard in the library, precisely where I had asked they might not be, the reason alleged being that when they had placed the books in the rooms, the prisoners had torn them.*

The worst feature we noticed about the Omsk prison was one common to most of the Russian houses of detention, for, apart from the necessary work of the

* This was a similar difficulty to that with which early prison philanthropists in England had at first to contend, as witnessed to by the engraving of "Mrs. Fry reading to the prisoners in Newgate in the year 1816," wherein is represented on the wall a placard, worded thus: "Notice is hereby given, that should any of the Bibles, prayer-books, or other printed books which are deposited in the ward for the use of the prisoners, be injured, mutilated, or defaced, every prisoner in the ward where such offence may occur will be held responsible, and be subject to such punishment as the keeper may direct."

establishment, they had not six men employed. I observed that one room was somewhat close and stuffy, but, upon my calling attention thereto, was reminded that persons of the class from which prisoners are most commonly drawn, prefer an atmosphere they call snug and warm to fresh air. In winter especially, they told us, "the prisoners stuff up all the holes with coats, or rags," as if wholesome air were their greatest enemy. This fact should be allowed for when we are asked by certain writers to believe in the horrid condition of the atmosphere of Russian prisons.*

* The author of "Called Back," on his way to Irkutsk, talks of prison "rooms reeking with filth, the floors throwing out poisonous emanations"; and when at last he finds the prisoner he is in search of, it is in a room thus characterized:—"From the stench which rushed through it, that open door might have been the entrance to some pestilential cavern at the bottom of which all the impurities of the world were rotting and putrefying. As it passed you, you felt that the thick air was poisonous with disease and death." Then, as if this aggregate of superlatives were insufficient, the author continues: "Filth! the place was one mass of it. Filth under foot; filth on the walls, the rafters, and the beams; filth floating about in the hot, heavy, pestiferous air." I beg the author's pardon, but this is great nonsense. I have been asked by friends more than once, "Are not Russian prisons dirty?" to which the answer has been both "Yes" and "No." There are prisons in England where the inmate of a cell must have every bit of brass polished, and his habitation spotlessly clean; or, as a Russian prisoner has put it, "where the activity of broom and pail is almost demoniac." In France, some of the cell floors are polished with the heel of a wine bottle and "elbow grease"; and I have seen prison schools and asylums so hyper-clean, even in Russia, that, to use a familiar expression, "one might have eaten off the floor." Compared with buildings such as these, the average Russian prison must be allowed to be "dirty," or, compared with a countess's drawing-room, even "filthy." But if such an expression should convey to a reader's mind what it did convey to the mind of the friend who pointed out the passage to me, and who thought faecal filth was intended thereby, then such language is a libel. The nearest resemblance I can think of, for the moment, to the floor of a Russian prison is the floor of a dirty national school, over which a pack of boys have run for a week with the dirty boots of winter. I do not remember ever seeing anything in Russian prisons worse than this, and in the majority of cases things were better; whilst as for the atmosphere, and the exaggerations talked about it, I have been in Russian prisons at all hours of the day, before some of the prisoners were up in the morning, and just before they were going to bed at night, but in none was the air so vitiated as that which some of the peasants to my knowledge *chose* to have in their own houses, or, to come nearer home, such as I used to meet with in parochial visiting when curate of Greenwich.

The next prison we entered was a civil one at Semipolatsinsk, whither we were accompanied by the police-master. Here a felon might have to remain as long as four years. There were 78 prisoners, of whom 25 were Kirghese. The latter are sometimes birched with rods up to 60 stripes—an appeal to their feelings that is much more effectual than the leisure of mere confinement, and the supply of better food than they habitually get outside. No less than 20 of the prisoners were accused of murder, and 35 of robbery. The morals of the inmates at Semipolatsinsk seemed to me better cared for than in most Russian prisons; for not only did the prisoners attend church every Sunday, and often on feast days, but a sermon was said to be read to them after every service, and, what I have never before heard of in a Russian prison, a priest came every Tuesday to the dining-room, and explained the Scriptures.

There was a religious curiosity in this prison in the person of a *Raskolnik* or dissenter, whose equal for sectarian ignorance and self-righteousness I have not often met. What had brought him to prison I do not exactly know; but we were told he came from the Urals, and would neither serve in the army as a conscript, nor obey the Government. I imagine that he belonged to the narrowest sect of the *Starovers*, or old believers, who regard Peter the Great as Antichrist, and set immense store by old *ikons* or sacred pictures, and ancient service books. The only things this man possessed were an old ikon, and a Liturgy and daily prayers in manuscript. Such idols did he make of these that I believe he would have parted with twenty years of his life rather than one of his treasures. I need hardly say he rejected my offer when I asked whether he would sell them. Of course I could not but in a fashion admire his steadfastness, and, thinking to meet his prejudice against reading the Bible in modern Russ,

I offered him a New Testament in Slavonic; but he declined it, saying that he did not want it. Thus he preferred to be confined to the book his own hands had written, to exercising his mind and heart in reading that which he had been taught to regard as the Word of God. In this prison I left matter for the prisoners to read, and sent to the Governor, General Protzenko, a sufficiency for the remaining 5 prisons, and the 17 hospitals, of the province.*

Thus far the prisons I have mentioned resembled those I saw in Siberia in 1879; but on reaching Vierny we had before us something comparatively new. The Vierny prison, built in 1875, was surrounded with trees and gardens, and enclosed by a high wall. It rarely holds any female prisoners, and there is only one room intended for them; but out of 157 prisoners at the time of our visit, 6 were women, and of these 4 had murdered their husbands. One woman had promised £40 to two Cossack under-officers to kill her husband, but the captured perpetrators of the dark deed told us they had not received the money. There was a dark

* The prisons were as follows :—

Semipolatsinsk military prison for 120 prisoners				
	civil		100	„
Pavlodar	„	„	50	„
Ust-Kamenogorsk		„	50	„
Karkaralinsk	„	„	20	„
Zaisan	„	„	100	„

From the official report of Semipolatsinsk given me, I learn that the number of crimes throughout the province in 1881 was 517, or 41 more than in 1880; of these crimes, 362 were of the nature of larceny, and 50 murder. The number of persons—chiefly Kirghese—tried was 1,200 males and 12 females. The age of the majority of the criminals was between 21 and 30, and next from 31 to 40. Of 49 persons condemned, 2 were females, and 49 persons were retained on suspicion. From the year 1880 there remained 186 prisoners—235 were added in the course of the year, and 258 released, leaving a balance of 163 in prison throughout the province on 1st January, 1882. The report further states that the temporary prison at Karkaralinsk is unsatisfactory by reason of age and want of accommodation. The administration of the prison is vested with the Semipolatsinsk committee, and its branches and the ladies' committee at the capital. The receipts of the committee amounted to £1,170, of which £241 were carried forward to the next year's account.

cell in the building, in which a prisoner might be confined from 4 hours to 6 days. The prisoners were of varied nationalities—Russians, Tatars, Kirghese, Dungans, Sarts, and Taranchis. Most of the Kirghese were in prison for theft; a gipsy for horse stealing; one Dungan for attacking a caravan, and another had been a commander of a Chinese regiment at the time of the rebellion in Kuldja, whence he had escaped and become a robber chief, but on coming back to Kuldja was arrested. In a



THE PRISON CHAPEL IN VIERNY.

room by himself was a Russian major confined for attempted wife murder, and in another room 11 prisoners for rape, murder, and robbery. The chapel was in exceedingly good order, and in the library I found, to my satisfaction and surprise, some New Testaments, Gospels, and other books. The New Testaments had been supplied by a Russian society for the distribution of religious literature, at the instance, we heard, of a M. Pantusoff, who had given several books, and had others bound at his own

expense. We heard of further good deeds of this Russian gentleman, but were not so fortunate as to meet him. I am indebted to him, however, for some of my information on Kuldja, respecting which province he has compiled statistics.

Vierny being the capital of the Semirechia province, I asked the Vice-Governor for statistics of the prisons, and a copy was made for me of the official report for the preceding year. I nowhere else during my journey got anything so detailed, but as the prisons we subsequently entered at Tashkend and Samarkand were better, if anything, than that at Vierny, I assume that the report does not give an exaggerated idea of the condition of prisons in Russian Turkistan generally. A prominent feature of the report is the interest taken in the prisoners by voluntary committees who manage many of the prison affairs.*

Instead, for instance, of the prisoners each receiving 3*d.* a day for food, the committee undertook to cater for them, deputing the inspector to carry out their instructions. Each member of the committee came on duty by turns for a week, visiting the prison daily, inspecting the rooms and the kitchen, and afterwards writing remarks in the visitors' book. This book was, on a certain day, submitted to the Vice-President, who saw that the irregularities noted by the directors were rectified. In 1881 an abundance of vegetables was grown in the prison garden, such as cabbages and potatoes, carrots, fennel, parsley, garlick, cucumbers, water-melons, and melons, and in addition each prisoner was allowed, daily, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of meat. So cheap, however, are provisions at Vierny, that, after supplying bread and other eatables, the committee

* Speaking first of the Vierny prison, it says that, at the time for making annual repairs, the building was clean and in good condition, but £66 had been expended for repairs during the year, and out of money saved the outer walls of the prison church had been plastered and whitened. A belfry also was added to the church, £250 only of the cost of £620 being borne by the Government, the committee under-

effected a saving in the maintenance of prisoners of £344, which was applied to other needs. For the moral good of the prisoners, the report says, the committee did all in its power, but nothing is mentioned beyond the church services on Sundays and festivals. A Cossack prisoner confessed to the prison inspector the murder of his cousin. "All prisoners of the orthodox faith prepared for and were favoured by the reception of the Holy Sacrament." Prisoners who could read and write (of whom, however, there were usually very few) were supplied with books. No converts, the report says, were made to the orthodox faith.

There is no infirmary in the prison, prisoners seriously ill being sent to the military hospital, and £120 in 1881 was paid for their maintenance. Those with minor ailments were treated gratis by M. Sobolevsky, a member of the committee, to the number of 300. (This, I presume, includes not only local offenders, but prisoners *en route* to exile.) Only very few of the Vierny prisoners knew any handicraft, and the whole amount earned in the prison was only about £10, of which half was given to the prisoners at the time, and a trifle remained for them on their release. The value of the vegetables grown in the garden was £25, the reserves for winter consisting of 360 bushels of potatoes and 541 gallons of salted cabbage. Prisoners on their entrance were inspected by the physician, sent to the bath, and supplied with new clothes. There were neither juvenile offenders, nor prisoners for debt in 1881. Among the gifts sent to the prison during the year, the report mentions two bells, and building material for the church belfry; a tailor's

taking the remainder, and paying some from a fund at their disposal for extraordinary expenses. Of the total number of prisoners, one-eighth only were Russians, and of Tatars rather less. The weather at Vierny is hot in summer, and the committee, instead of straw mattresses, had bought 140 felts, upon which the natives are accustomed to sleep, and had also made 30 new hammocks, costing £18. The committee had expended from its own special resources, on wages for overseers, cook, baker, etc., £231.

sewing machine, for the employment of the detained and tea and sugar at Christmas to the value of £5.

After thus describing what has been done at the prison in the capital, the report deals with the smaller houses of detention in Kopal, Karakol, Lepsinsk, and Tokmak. I need not repeat in this connection features that have already occurred in the prison at Vierny,* but I have allowed myself to enter somewhat in detail into the prison affairs of Semirechia, because the report gives some idea of the prisons even in the remotest part of the mountains, and also, instead of vague commonplaces on Russian prisons in general, makes definite statements that are in a measure capable of disproof if they are not true. I left at Vierny with M. Aristoff, the Vice-Governor, a quantity of literature, in addition to distributing some myself, and since my return to England I have received an account of the distribution, which is all that I could wish.†

* At Kopal the prisoners were from 4 to 8 in a room, and those who could read were supplied with religious books. The report adds, that with each party going away (that is, I presume, prisoners on the march) the regulations issued by the Most Holy Synod (probably concerning religious service) were rigorously complied with. No donations were received at Kopal except from members of the committee. At Karakol, a small place far away in the Thian Shan mountains, civil prisoners were kept in the military guard-room, the priest tolerably often praying with the prisoners in their rooms and reading to them. At this place the prisoners' allowance was given them in cash, and they bought wood for boiling tea to the value of £2. One prisoner only was ill during the year. At Lepsa, prisoners were confined in a private house containing 5 rooms, one being a guard-room. The rooms were fairly large, and ventilated by louveres in the windows. Prisoners awaiting trial were kept separate from the condemned. Lastly, in the Tokmak district, prisoners were kept in a former telegraph office at Pishpek, and in guard-rooms at Tokmak and Naryn. At Pishpek the articles of dress purchased during the year were 6 sheepskins and 6 pairs of felt snow-shoes. These articles were given to prisoners *en route*, who could go no further in summer clothing. The sum of 12 kopecks per day for food allowed of something being put by towards the purchase of butter for the preparation of prisoners' gruel. At Tokmak, besides the subscriptions of the committee, gifts were received from the surrounding villages to the amount of £1 8s.

† M. Aristoff writes: "The books and pamphlets that you were so kind as to give me for the hospitals, schools, and prisons of the province of Semirechia, have been sent and distributed in the following manner and quantities: (1) To the Vierny military hospital, 5 Gospels,

But to proceed. If the surroundings of the Vierny prison were attractive, those of Tashkend were still more so, for the building stood in quite a park of poplar trees, planted in avenues, and affording shade in the intensely hot summer. There were in confinement 379 prisoners, of whom 6 were women, 5 natives and one Russian (this latter having poisoned her husband). The number of Russian male prisoners was 37, the majority of the remainder being Sarts. On going into the kitchen we found the soup excellent, and learned that on Sundays the prisoners received an extra plate of rice porridge. In fact, when we saw the Sarts and Kirghese sit down to their clean wooden pannikins of soup, after having seen something of native life outside, it made no great claim on one's belief when the chief of the town, who accompanied us, observed that the Sarts fared far better in prison than in their own homes. There was in the building a mosque, with rostrum for Muhammadan preaching on Friday, when, as also on their festivals, as many Mussulman prisoners as pleased attended. There was too, a Russian church, and a small library. In the lavatory, with *cabinets*, there was no offensive smell, and there was a large, flat, basin-shaped depression made in the floor for the Muhammadans to perform their ceremonial washings. I inquired for the rods used in corporal punishment; but they said they had

New Testaments, and Psalms; (2) Vierny prison, 10 copies of the same, with 3 copies of the Kirghese New Testament; (3) to the smaller prisons at Kopal, Lepsa, and Pishpek, have been sent 2 copies of the Russian and 1 of the Kirghese books; (4) to the small military hospitals at Kuldja and Kopal, 2 copies each of the Russian books; (5) a copy each of the Kirghese New Testament to the Kirghese schools in Karakol and Vierny; (6) a few religious tracts were given to the infant asylum of Vierny, and all the remaining books and tracts were left at the disposal of the Inspector of the Schools of Semirechia. In sending the books to the hospitals and prisons, I required of the administrators, according to your desire, that they should be left in the rooms under the responsibility of the chief, and not placed in the libraries. As to the Inspector, I asked him to distribute the books and pamphlets amongst the pupils of the schools of the province."

none. The rooms were clean and airy, and each was furnished with a lamp. I may add that the prison is built to accommodate only 200 inmates, whence the obvious inference would be that the building was much crowded. But this was not the case; for outside the prison under the trees were erected 11 felt tents, one for the soldiers on guard, and the remainder for the prisoners crowded out of the building, and who, doubtless from their manner of Eastern life, would be only too thankful for the freedom of a tent, as compared with what to their nomad ideas would be the stuffiness of a room, however airy.*

As we left the Tashkend prison, there was a crowd of prisoners' friends waiting outside with melons and other fruit to give to those within. I thought the place one of the least repulsive of its kind I had seen in Russia; but things were not so good at Khokand. Here the prison was near the Khan's palace, and had formerly served as a barrack for the djiguitts of his Majesty, and the place was temporarily crowded, whilst another chamber, I suppose a prison proper, was being made ready. None of the prisoners were Russians, and many of them were petty offenders. One native, for stealing a horse, had been sentenced to six months by a native tribunal, and another for a like term for the adulteration of tea with sand, etc. Of two women prisoners, one, at the age of 25, had strangled her husband; another, at 19, was a *danseuse*

* I would call attention to this provision made for surplus prisoners, because I have more than once seen very strong statements made as to the overcrowding of Russian and Siberian jails, without any notice being taken of supplementary erections to meet an occasional emergency. Nothing is commoner in Russia and Siberia than to see hospital patients living under canvas in summer, and at Tiumen I remember being told that, during the march of the exiles, which takes place in the summer months, they frequently put up temporary tent accommodation for a sudden influx of prisoners. I do not mean to imply for a moment that Russian prisons are not in many cases overcrowded, for I know they are, but I wish to point out that, in some instances at all events, an effort is made to meet the emergency.

and a thief. In Bokhara, they told me the Emir did not allow girls to dance in public, but put them to death for doing so.

Two months before our visit the prisoners tried to escape in a body, and had been fired upon by the sentries, with the result that 16 were killed, a nephew of the late Khan among them, and 2 mortally wounded. Some who escaped were retaken and chained, and would be sent, it was thought, to Siberia, and a murderer then in confinement with them.

There was yet one prison for us to visit in Russian territory, namely, the town prison at Samarkand. This is a brick building with a large garden enclosed by a high wall. There were in it only 8 Russian prisoners, but of the total 145 there were 89 charged with serious crimes, namely: murder 42, robbery 29, theft 2, running away 16. Cases such as these are generally examined and finally decided by two local courts, one being a court of first instance, and the other of appeal. The confirmation of one of the Departments of the Senate, which sits at Petersburg, is required for exceptional cases, such as: the condemnation of individuals belonging to the privileged classes with loss of all civil rights; crimes committed by a band of criminals, etc., also complaints brought against the incorrect jurisdiction of any of the local courts. The Senate is the highest court of justice in Russia, which, like the local courts, is entirely independent of the influence of the administrative governmental authorities.

There were several rooms full of prisoners whose papers were 3,000 miles distant, at Petersburg. One man's case had begun 10 years before, in February 1872, and in April 1873, charged with the murder of a native, he came to prison. Matters had been complicated by his having escaped. His sentence was 15 years' hard labour in Siberia. One room was full of men bound for the same destination. In another room were two women who had escaped through the ceiling

of their prison at Katte-Kurgan. Some few of the prisoners had work to do, but not those charged with serious crimes. We visited this prison in the company of General Korolkoff, the acting governor of the province, and doubtless saw things at their best ; but there was this advantage in going on an inspection day, that I repeatedly saw prisoners using their right on such days of appealing or complaining to the monthly visitor. His Excellency told me afterwards that their conversation usually takes the form of a question as to when their papers are coming or how their case is going on. Sometimes complaints of administration were made, but usually without reason, and not often of serious matters. The prisoners were supplied with felts to lie on, and the cleanliness of the place was no doubt partly maintained by meals being taken in a common hall, and no food eaten in the rooms. To the foregoing I may add that the lavatory in this prison was particularly clean.

Here, then, I conclude my brief account, such as it is, of the prisons of Russian Central Asia. Some of the objections that were urged against my former testimony will hold good as to this, namely, that I travelled quickly, and was therefore liable to receive false impressions, and form erroneous conclusions. I trust, therefore, as I said before, that no one may be misled by taking my testimony for more than it is worth. I have tried to be accurate, and that is all I can say.*

* I may perhaps as well add that the foregoing chapters on prisons have been kindly looked over, as on a previous occasion, by a Russian official high in the prison administration, who says that, after reading them with the greatest attention, he finds no mistakes. With reference to the alleged preparation of the Siberian prisons for my visit, he assures me that the Ministry of the Interior made no such preparation,—in fact, could not well have so done,—adding also, that he personally would be obliged for any proof that can be brought confirmatory of such precautionary measures having been taken.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FROM SAMARKAND TO KITAB

A new country, little visited by Englishmen.—Changed mode of travel.—Tarantass despatched to Karshi.—My retinue.—Leaving Samarkand for Kara-Tiube.—Tent lodging in court of a mosque.—Slumbers disturbed.—Journey towards Kitab.—Ploughing and threshing.—The Takhta-Karacha Pass.—View of Shahr-i-sabz.—Descent to Kainar-bulak.—Welcome from Bokhariot ambassadors.—Kainar refreshments.—Ride to Kitab.

THUS much in regard to Russian Central Asia. Now we enter Bokhara, Khiva, and Turkmenia. When we were preparing to leave Samarkand I was conscious of making a distinctly new departure. One Russian officer had expressed surprise that I did not travel with a servant. I decidedly preferred not to do so on Russian soil, but now I was to start as a proprietor of horses, with two interpreters and two mounted attendants—a cavalcade of five, that afterwards increased sometimes to a dozen. Further, the tarantass, with all my personal conveniences, was no longer to be the chariot in which we could roll along in comparative ease, but, at the outset at all events, the baggage had to be reduced to a minimum, and myself to take to the saddle. The tarantass was to be sent by a carriage-road through Djam to Karshi, a distance of 94 miles, and it was not easy at first to decide what things were so necessary or so valuable that they must be taken with me; but when all was in readiness there were 16 packages to be placed in the carriage, besides such as could be locked up. The

common cart of the country is called an *arba*, and the man who drives it an *arba-kesh*. One of these men had undertaken to get my tarantass to Karshi for £4, and there await my coming, asking, however, for three-fourths of the pay in advance.

For some reason I did not clearly understand, the *arba-kesh* insisted on taking the wheels off the tarantass and mounting it on an *arba*. I confess to having some qualms about committing "my little all" to the care of this man, especially in a new country where I should be unable to invoke the aid of a friendly *tchinovnik* if things went wrong. A happy thought occurred, however, when all was in readiness, respecting the importance attached by Easterns, and for that matter by Russians too, to a seal. Taking light and wax I solemnly sealed up the curtain and hood, in the presence of the *arba-kesh* and his helper, and then called them in to put each "his mark" to a receipt for the tarantass and its contents. I afterwards heard that the natives were frightened by this formal proceeding, especially as it took place in the house of the Governor, and they drew from the transaction precisely the inference I intended, that they had something important committed to their charge, and must mind what they were about with it. The tarantass then rolled out of the yard like a miniature locomotive on one of Pickford's trucks, after which, on October 2nd, I placed my foot in the stirrup, as Tamerlane used to say when leaving Samarkand, and went forth to conquer.

The two *djiguitts*, named Kolutch and Fazul, were both *Uzbegs*, and dressed in long robes and white turbans. They were to accompany us, if I pleased, as far as the Oxus, but they were provided with little luggage, for it was all stowed away in saddle-bags. Fazul could speak no Russian, and, so far as information was concerned, was of little service; so I sent him forward to accompany the man who had charge of the

sumpter horse, which had been hired from the bazaar at 2s. a day to go with us as far as Karshi. Kolutch, the other djiguitt, was a man of more character, and, for an Oriental, had a considerable amount of "go" in him; too much, I fancy, for the natives, over whom he appeared occasionally to lord it, but he was faithful to me and mine. Our Tatar interpreter was one Sulci-man Yakooboff, whom we surnamed "Yakoob."

Leaving the Governor's palace, and its kind hospitality, we passed the tomb of Tamerlane, and saw the Russians at work on the exterior of the dome, and then left Samarkand by what used to be the Khoja Akhrar gate, so called after a celebrated saint of that name, but now thrown down. Just beyond there sat a woman by the wayside begging, who rose and lifted her veil, to show the white leprous spots on her face; *—the last woman's face I was to see for some time, for over the border they were all veiled. Our route lay through suburban gardens, with fruit-trees hanging on either hand over the walls, till we reached the Ankhor aryk, where the steppe commences, with hillocks here and there, but bare and lifeless, except where covered with thorny bush. Our first day's journey was to be only as far as Kara-Tiube, a distance of 21 miles. This was so arranged in order to give us an easy start before entering on the country beyond, which was said to be unusually difficult. We were warned of this at our last lunch at the Governor's house, and heard that some officers had even discussed whether we should accomplish the mountain pass at all; but my national vanity was flattered to hear that one of them said, "Oh, yes, they will succeed, for they are Englishmen; and what the English begin they carry through." It would not have done to break down after this; but as I was not in bed till half-past one the night before, and had risen at six in order to

* Like the four leprous men at the entering in of the gate of Samaria, who said, "Why sit we here until we die" (2 Kings vii. 3).

pack, I was not sorry that the first day's journey was to be only an afternoon ride.

About halfway to Kara-Tiube the road crosses a deep ravine with steep banks, and we had been told that the remains of Tamerlane's camp were still visible. Neither Kolutch nor Yakoob had ever heard of them, however; and though we did see certain mounds of earth apparently artificial, I should think them more likely to be connected with former irrigation works than with Tamerlane. Fifteen miles from Samarkand we came to the Russian summer camp, where the soldiers were exercising, and singing as they marched. One of the things that struck me was the ranks of sham men they had put up to shoot at for a review on the day following. Yakoob informed us that, in proceeding, the correct thing was for me to go last, and the djiguitt a little distance on ahead; but, however correct, this had one disadvantage for me, namely, that I caught all the dust kicked up by those preceding me, and against this I soon revolted. Again, it is considered by the Asiatics more dignified for a great personage to let his horse walk or amble than to gallop. Yakoob said my charger had been doing no work of late, and, therefore, begged I would not ride too fast the first day; but my steed was like to a fed horse in the morning, neighing wherever he went, and impatient of restraint; so I let him go. Mr. Sevier's horse took the cue from mine, and we thus frequently left Yakoob and Kolutch for a while behind. We had a fair wheel-road to within 5 miles of our destination, but on reaching the foot of the mountains it became little more than a path, though still practicable for carriages. We mounted the first range of hills, and had from the summit a fine view of the valley beyond, and of the plains we had left behind. Notice of our coming had been sent forward to the chief of the volost, who, as we approached Kara-Tiube, came out to meet us, and conducted us to the courtyard of a

mosque, where a tent was put up for our use. We had left Samarkand at 2.15, and completed our 21 miles in 3½ hours.

Kara-Tiube lies in a hollow among the lower hills of the Samarkand range, and under native rule possessed a frontier fortress. The Emir made it a centre of operations during his war with the invading Russians. The fortifications were destroyed by General Abramoff in 1868. I could not help thinking what a change had come over the scene in a dozen years, for I suppose that, previous to the advent of the Russians, the Mussulmans would not willingly have tolerated the presence of an "infidel" in their midst; whereas now they were entertaining us in the courts of their mosque.* The tent was nicely carpeted under foot with handsome bands around, though the roof and sides were somewhat the worse for wear—one rent, in fact, being opened to admit light. Yakoob said that he would close it when we were going to sleep. Till then it would help to air the tent, he said, utterly oblivious that there was too much air for my liking already. Here we ate our first meal prepared by the natives, beginning with sweetmeats, and going on through soup, native bread, grapes, and *pilan*, made of meat and rice.

As we intended to start early next morning, we soon got ready after dinner for bed. I set my alarum, and placed my revolver under the pillow. But, though tired, it was not so easy for me to sleep. Just outside the djiguitts were talking, and sending round their gurgling *kalian*, or water-pipe, the horses were restless, sundry dogs barking and whining, as well as stallions fighting. My first sleep was disturbed by a rattling of plates, due, it soon appeared, to an intruding tom-cat. I quickly drove him out, and, being thus on

* We were not again lodged in the courtyard of a religious building, but it served to recall the Israelites, who "made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God" (Neh. viii. 16).

my feet, looked outside the tent. There lay Yakoob and the djiguitts asleep and covered, but in the open air, as an ordinary thing, and, all around being quiet, I turned in again, to be disturbed within an hour by another cat getting on the table, knocking over a candlestick, and stopping my alarm. Of course, I blessed every member of the feline race, gave chase again, and re-set my alarm, of which I then heard no more till it awoke me early next morning, not so stiff as I expected to be, and ready to set things astir.

Our second day's journey was to Kitab, a distance of 22 miles over the Takhta-Karacha Pass, for which we set out at half-past seven o'clock. The road threads the defile of Katta-Sai, in which flows a turbulent little mountain stream of the same name. Following the windings of this, and occasionally crossing it, we saw from the road a tiller of the soil, with a yoke of oxen and a plough, that from its primitive form might have served for Elisha the son of Shaphat. Somewhat further on we saw a good illustration of the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. The grain, instead of being thrashed, is trodden out by oxen or horses, on a space specially prepared, termed *khirman*. In this case two oxen only were employed, and their treading power was economized more ingeniously than pleasantly, I should imagine, to one at least of the pair. One ox was fastened to the off end of a pole, that worked on a pivot in the centre of the floor, a boy holding on to his tail as to a rudder, and thus providing for the circumference of the floor, whilst the second ox, with his hinder parts in the centre and his head tied to his fellow, by means of a crab-like motion trod the central area.*

* The oxen were not muzzled (Deut. xxv. 4), and the abundance of food placed within their reach lent vividness to the language of Hosea x. 11., "Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn." I did not see in Central Asia an implement that I observed in the Trans-Caucasus, which made clearer to me a verse in Isaiah, where the prophet says (xli. 15), "Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth." Among the Armenians, I saw in use in 1880 an instrument suggestive of the Latin *tribulum*

For some distance the rise towards the pass was very gentle. Before the climbing began in earnest, we called a halt at a poor little uninhabited caravansary, Aman-Kutane, where we ate bread and melons to fortify us for the coming steeper road. Here was one of the plantations mentioned by General Korolkoff, which the Russians place on the mountains to keep the soil from washing down.

Nor was this the only vegetation. So long as we kept near the stream there were considerable patches of grass, and we passed a collection of mud huts and tents inhabited by semi-nomads who tilled a little ground. Across the stream we saw the women weaving, and a narrow fabric stretched on the ground. On losing sight of the stream, we left vegetation behind, and had to climb a narrow path, almost a rude staircase, of stones and boulders, to a height above the sea of about 5,200 feet.

We were now on the crest of the mountains of Kitab, a continuation of the Hissar range, that separates the Zarafshan province from Bokhara. From the broad platform of rock, about 30 paces wide, we looked back on the dry and arid steppe we had crossed from Samarkand; but before us the scene was of a more pleasing character. There lay on either side of the Kashka-daria the twin towns of Kitab and Shahr, called together, from the number of the trees and gardens, Shahr-i-sabz, or "the green city." The beauty of the landscape from this spot had been extolled by Colonel Alexandroff, who lunched with

(whence our word tribulation), a heavy plank, or threshing sledge, studded on one side with angular, tooth-like pieces of iron and flint, about an inch high. The plank was widened at one end, for a man to stand on, and narrowed and raised at the other for an animal to be attached; and this instrument, dragged over the floor, not only beat out the corn, as did the treading of oxen, but cut up the straw. The whole detritus was then swept in a heap, and tossed into the air by shovelful, when the corn fell on the earth, and the rest "became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors," which the wind carried away (Dan. ii. 35).

us the day before we started. To an Oriental this view would be, no doubt, exceedingly pretty, and to an European tolerably so ; but it was nothing compared with that obtainable from scores of places in England, to say nothing of mountain scenery in Switzerland or the Caucasus.

We had now to descend by a far steeper track, over bare rocks of granite and gneiss, the path leading by a cornice, excessively sinuous and obstructed with round stones that rolled down the precipitous slopes. I judged it best to give my horse full liberty to choose his own path, and so did Sevier. It was amusing sometimes to see the creatures after they had chosen a track, and found it more difficult than was anticipated, hark back and try another. I did not, at the time, think of the danger we ran, if a horse stumbled, of breaking one's skull against the jutting rocks on every hand ; but when reading from Dr. Schuyler that only one of his party had a sufficiently strong head to make the whole descent on horseback, it occurred to me that we should have done more wisely to dismount and allow the horses to be led. On completing the descent among the rocks, where the path was barely wide enough for two horses to pass, and issuing from the Takhta Karacha defile, the road widened as we approached Kainar-bulak, our first Bokhariot village.

We were now only 7,500 paces, or say five miles, from Russian territory, where one may find the newest outcome of the intelligence of the nineteenth century, yet we seemed to have dropped from the clouds among men and things 3,000 or 4,000 years behind. If what we saw among the Kirghese recalled the days of Abraham, the new experience brought to one's thoughts a number of messengers despatched by one of the kings of Israel. We were met by the Bek, or Governor of the district, also a military officer sent direct from the Emir, with several others, wearing turbans of spotless white, and clad, one in striped silk,

another in a robe of cloth of gold, and all mounted on gaily caparisoned horses. They had come to inquire for the welfare of various personages, to receive and welcome me, and to put a series of questions respecting my health and my journey. After shaking hands and saluting me with an *Aman*, the Bek proceeded to ask in stereotype fashion, "Is the Emperor well? Is the Governor-General Chernaieff well? and is General Abramoff well?" This was spoken in Turki to Yakoob, who put it to Sevier in Russ, after which it reached me in English. I replied that, when I passed through Petersburg, his Imperial Majesty was well, also that in Petersburg I saw General Chernaieff, who was well, and that General Abramoff, whom we had recently left, was in good health. This principal messenger, having completed his ceremonious inquiries, moved on in front, and the old general or colonel came up to announce that the Emir had sent him to say that he was very glad we had come, that he hoped I was not greatly exhausted by the difficulties of the way, and begged us to take refreshment in Kainar.

Kainar is a *kish-lak*, or village, as it is usually rendered, though the word literally means winter quarters, just as *lai-lak* means summer quarters. In summer quarters the habitation used is a tent, but in winter quarters it is often a mud house, which in summer is deserted or turned into a store. In the present instance we were conducted through the yard of what I suppose was the Bek's house, our horses picketed to a circle of posts, and ourselves shown into a room where was a table evidently rigged up for the occasion, and groaning beneath a dozen, if not a score, of trays of grapes, sweetmeats, almonds, sugared nuts, melons, and other kinds of fruit. Upon these I concluded we were to make a meal, and I began the attack, till it appeared these things were only by way of pudding and sweets presented in inverse order to English fashion, and to be followed by more substantial

dishes of meat, boiled chicken, and rice. This was a lesson for me, and so was the next performance in clearing the table; for whereas, at home, one is brought up to "eat what you please, but pocket none," in Bokhara it is expected that you eat what you can, and pocket the rest. All was to be mine, and I found that Yakoob, the djiguitts, and attendants were ready to accept the remainder as a perquisite, and stow away the same in their bags.

We were left alone to partake of refreshment, and when the envoys subsequently entered, I showed to him who appeared to be master of the ceremonies the letter I had received from General Chernaieff, whereupon he spoke to me about seeing the Emir on the following day. For the information of the Emir our names had to be entered in a book, the hour we arrived, and when we departed, with particulars of our visit. They asked how soon we meant to start for Kitab, whereupon observing that it was 1.45 p.m., I replied, "In 15 minutes"; but this was contrary to their notions, and they wished to put down 3.0 as the hour of our departure, "so that it might look to the Emir as if we had been well entertained." Not that they cared, however, that we should wait, and our horses were accordingly made ready.

It was five miles further to Kitab, along a carriageable road, through an inhabited district. On starting, our escort increased, and we were preceded by a score or so of horsemen, who smothered us with dust. I begged them, therefore, to go on far ahead. This dispersed the crowd, and we rode along to Urus (or Russian) Kishlak, and beyond we forded the River Kashka. Soon afterwards we approached the mud wall, 53 miles long, which once surrounded Shahr-i-sabz, and included, besides Kitab and Shahr, several villages, with fields and gardens. These entirely occupied the whole space within the wall. In winter a large part of the neighbouring country is under

water, and even in the dry season unhealthy swamps abound. We had to approach the citadel of Kitab by a narrow street, with water and mud up to the horses' knees, the Colonel, in cloth of gold, having motioned me to his side to enter the town with something like state. As we passed along, the people rose and saluted the Colonel with a "*Salaam aleikum*," or "Peace be with you," but not bowing so servilely as at Khokand. Other mounted officials now came to present themselves, and formed a cavalcade that brought us at last to what was to be our lodging. I had read that it was a point of Bokhariot etiquette as to how near one should ride up to a palace or great house before dismounting. My retinue, I observed, alighted outside the street gates, but *we* were conducted on horseback "right in" the courtyard, and then, having dismounted, were shown into our room.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FROM KITAB TO SHAHR.

Curious hospitality.—Entertainment by dancing-boys and mountebanks.
—Native appreciation of *batchas*.—Visits from the Emir's court.
—Our lodging and spies.—Reception of Bokhariot officers.—Guard of native soldiers.—Dress for an audience with the Emir.—Procession and arrival at the fortress.—The Emir Seid Muzaffar-ed-din.—Various estimates of his character.—Admission to his presence.—My requests and presents.—Refreshment with courtiers.
—Princely presents.—Drive to Shahr in the Emir's carriage.

OUR house at Kitab was certainly not a mansion, for the principal room measured only about 12 feet by 10. Perhaps lack of space was meant to be atoned for by abundance of air, for there were 6 doors, and over 3 of them unglazed lattices. We learned, however, that hereafter we should be lodged in better guest-houses, but that few embassies came to Kitab. Soon after our arrival we were asked what we should like to do. I replied that we wished to see the town, and that I should be glad if we could find some coins and other antiquities or curiosities. I had been told by the Russians that the shortest space etiquette would allow of our staying at Kitab would be three days, and this was the time I told them when they asked how long I should remain their guest. My answers were reported to the Emir, and his messenger came back to say that they thought we should stay at least a week, that my wish for coins should be attended to, and that we could see the town after our audience with the Emir.

On our arrival we had found, as at Kainar, the table laden with trays of sweets and fruits, and, in addition, there awaited me, as a present, at least half-a-dozen loaves of white sugar, and as many boxes of sugar-candy, both imported from Russia. I soon voted my own tea preferable to the green tea drunk by the natives, and, after taking refreshment, found that we were to be entertained that evening by a grand performance of musicians, batchas, and buffoons. At dusk the scene was lighted up with 25 lamps, and we were to sit under a spreading vine that formed a rustic balcony at the back of the house, and from thence to see the fun. Three men, with tambourines, sat near a charcoal fire in a brazier, over which, from time to time, they held their instruments to tighten the parchment. Presently four boys, or *batchas*, arrived, and were presented to us as the *artistes* of the evening; and whilst they were drinking tea and eating fruit, the tambourines, increased to five, began to sound and the men to sing. The batchas were dressed in red flowing robes, with loose, wide trousers, but had their feet uncovered, their most striking peculiarity being their long hair like that of girls. In the first dance the four boys walked leisurely round and round, keeping time with clappers. In the next they danced faster, clapped their hands, and sang in unison,—love, on the part of the supposed girl, being the burden of their song. In the third dance the lover answered this ditty, and in the fourth the dance was interspersed with somersaults and other antics.

Whilst the batchas were dancing and putting themselves through various movements intended to be graceful, two men carried candles, dodging about to hold them close to the dancers, that their good looks might be admired, the candle-bearers themselves contorting their faces, and disporting themselves like clowns. One of their nonsensical feats, when there was a lull in the dance, was to sit opposite each other and

make grimaces, or move the muscles and skin of the face like a rabbit. They brought on next a Persian song and dance with whistles, the batchas snapping their fingers in time, and then striking together a pair of wands.

As the entertainment proceeded, a large crowd, attracted by the sound of the music, pressed into the courtyard and garden, delighted to witness the performance. Their appreciation of the batchas was intense. They offered them tea and fruit, and, when the boys sat, they could hardly have been made more of had they been the first stars of a London season. They seated themselves apart from "the vulgar crowd," near to us, whereupon lights were placed before them, that all might gaze and admire. He thinks himself a happy man to whom a batcha condescends to offer a bowl of tea, and receives it with expressions of great respect. So, again, if a man offers tea to a batcha, it is counted an honour if it is taken and the cup returned, after tasting, to the owner, but a great indignity if the remainder be handed to another. I gave the boys refreshments, and sent round to the crowd some of our boxes of sugar-candy, which was readily accepted.

We were next entertained with some acrobatic feats, the men bending backwards till their heads touched the ground, and performing several other fantastic exercises. After this, a man gave us a Hindu dance, and preparations were made for some rude comic acting, in which were represented various scenes from native life—first a quarrel and law-suit about a scarf. Presently a high priest, or some dignitary amply covered with cotton wool to represent white hair and beard, was carried in on a sort of sedan chair. Whether he was intended to represent the Emir or the Grand Lama I am uncertain, but he was waited upon with great obsequiousness, whilst the musicians kept up vociferous

singing and loud beating of tambourines. Presently a supposed dead man was brought in, upon whom the mullah sprinkled water in such abundance as to make the corpse wince, and he then proceeded to count the dead man's debts, supplying himself with a substitute for ink with a nastiness that will not allow of description. At length, by accident or by design, one of the candles set fire to the cotton wool of the judge's hair, and he was about to be enveloped in flames, which fortunately they were able to put out, and this touch of reality brought the proceedings to an uncere- monious close.

Central Asiatics, as far as I know, do not dance for their own enjoyment, but merely as a spectacle. The boys are early trained to it, and continue their profession until the beard grows. The Emir has a staff of them, who, when he stays in Kitab, dance every night from 7 to 10 in some public place. Rich men also keep them for their enjoyment, and even poor families club together to maintain a corps for their joint amusement.

It was nearly midnight before the batchas left our house, and I am not sure that they did not prolong the fun near at hand; but they had put us up bedsteads and pillows at either end of our room, and we were glad enough to get to bed. Next morning they gave us for breakfast fruits, boiled milk and rice with butter, and sour cream. Quite early some courtiers came, saying that the Emir had already asked several times after my health, and his Majesty (or his Highness, as the Russians call him) wished to know whether we were dull, because, if so, he would send some persons to amuse us. I replied that we were not dull, having plenty of reading and writing to do. His spokesman, we were told, was a colonel, and we afterwards learned that he was a very near attendant and minister of the Emir, named Hodja Abul Fais, and one of the most enlightened of the Bokhariots that we met. He had

lived seven years in Constantinople, and had travelled to Kief, Moscow, and Orenburg. Both being travellers we compared notes, I telling him of my Central Asian journey, and my former route through Siberia round the world. I offered him a copy of St. Matthew's Gospel in Osmanli Turkish, which he appeared to read fluently. On learning what it was, he said God had given four books to men, of which this was one, whereupon he kissed and accepted it with thanks, putting it away in his breast. He then asked how old I was, guessed me too young by ten years, and was surprised that my beard was so black and without grey hairs.

After the departure of this courtier I walked out to look at our surroundings. Our house stood on a bank some half-dozen feet above the courtyard, with a stream of water running near, the specific gravity of which I tested, and found to be 99. In the yard and the adjacent open sheds our horses were picketed, whilst on the other side of the house were sunken, muddy flower-beds, watered by irrigation, with chrysanthemums in blossom. Near these beds were dwellings resembling offices, into which I began to pry, when Yakoob came running up in alarm to inform me that I was entering the women's domains. Of course I at once drew back, though so effectually had the fair ones kept out of sight that I had not the least idea there were any on the premises. I fancy, however, they had seen me, and I perceived that other eyes were upon us also. Six open doors in one small room I had voted rather too much of a good thing, and closed accordingly the three that gave access to the courtyard, leaving open for light and air those facing the garden and offices. One of the attendants came to ask whether I would not like the opposite doors opened, so that the air might enter, but I declined, beginning to suspect that what he really wanted was to spy from the yard what I was doing,

and this suspicion increased when, chancing to look in the direction of the offices, I saw a man had taken a seat commanding a view of our room, off which he scarcely took his eyes. In the course of the morning a messenger came from the Emir and told us, to our disgust, that his Majesty, having heard how late we got to bed on the previous night, felt sure we must be tired, and so would not see us till the morrow. About midday we said that we should like to go out in the afternoon for a ride, and to see the town, whereupon I discovered that, in addition to being a guest, I was also a prisoner, for they said we must not leave the premises without the permission of the Emir, and this permission did not come.

In the evening we were informed of the arrival of the assistant to the commander-in-chief of the Bokhariot forces, the commander of a battalion, and a guard of honour, 30 strong. There was no need to fear, his Majesty said, but he had thought it better to send us a guard.* We were just finishing our evening meal, and I invited the officers in, and plied them with—not cups, but—bowls of tea, bread, butter, and eggs. Upon these meats the gallant commanders made a vigorous onslaught, and it was not until each had disposed of half-a-dozen basins of tea that they cried “enough,” their politeness having come to an end; for I discovered that, according to Bokhariot etiquette, they were bound to keep on eating as long as we kept offering.

I then tried to amuse them by showing them engravings of Central Asia in Madame Ujfalvy’s “*De Paris à Samarcand*,” but the officers seemed somewhat slow in taking in their meaning. It occurred to me afterwards that they were perhaps the first pictures they had ever seen.† To Yakoob, who had been

* To be “valiant men about our bed . . . every man with his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night” (Cant. iii. 8).

† The Sunni Muhammadans hold it contrary to their faith to represent anything that has life, whether vegetable or animal, being taught, I

brought up in Russia, all was plain enough, as he looked over the book with pleasure, and interpreted ; but it raised a curious question in my mind as to what would be the impression produced on a man's understanding, at 40 years of age, who then saw a picture for the first time.

Next morning we went out to look at our guard of honour. One officer wore a tunic of red glazed calico, a black sheepskin hat, and a sword, and his brother officer carried in his girdle, as indicative of his rank, a battle-axe. The uniforms of the rank and file were of the nondescript character, easily imagined when I add that the Emir's soldiers find their own food and clothes. One soldier had on his coat buttons which had done service in various British regiments, the 11th among them, whilst their muskets were of all degrees of antiquity, one having been stamped in the year of grace 1800! The Emir had twelve guns at Kitab, and more at Bokhara, and his army consisted, it was said, of 14,000 warriors, of whom 6,000 were cavalry. If these, thought I, are a specimen of the Sovereign's body-guard, and the pick of his troops, what must the rest be like, and would it not have been passing strange if the Russians had *not* beaten them? But whilst I was taking stock of the soldiers, and showing them my revolver, some courtiers came to say that the Emir was ready to receive me, and I had to think of a fitting Court dress.

Dr. Wolff, who escaped with difficulty from the clutches of the present Emir's father, wore his gown and hood into Bokhara, carried a huge Bible under his arm, and announced that he was the great dervish of England ; and he partly attributed his safety to having maintained throughout his ecclesiastical character. I had some thought, therefore, of taking a

believe, that those who paint animals will at the day of judgment have to put life into them. Anyway, not a ghost of a picture of any living thing did I see all through the khanate.

leaf from his book, and the more so because Russians had told me that the Emir would not distinguish between my clerical coat and that of a Russian merchant, and that all the Russian dignitaries this Asiatic sovereign had seen were in uniform and decorated with medals. This suggested to me that it might be desirable if I could combine in my raiment the splendours of ecclesiastical vestments and military uniform. But where was the Emir? Was he living close by, our house being a part of his palace, or was he a mile off? because, if I were going to get myself up very gorgeously, and his Majesty were living close by, it might be more convenient to walk. My inquiry had reached the great man's ears, and he seemed to have taken it as a trait of humility on my part that I did not think myself worthy to come mounted to his presence. He therefore sent me a message to say he had heard I talked of walking to the palace, but that he desired I would ride.

So I proceeded to make ready, and first put on my cassock, that did duty when I went to the Court of St. James's. Over this I put on a gorgeous, gold-embroidered waistcoat, adapted from a garment I bought in Servia, as a specimen of a Servian gentleman's vest—grand enough for a general—and tied a cincture at the bottom, with ends hanging at the side, and over these I hung my scarlet hood. Fortunately, perhaps, there was no mirror in the room, or my heart might have failed me; but I next put round my neck a Provincial Grand Chaplain's collar of purple and gold, and on this pinned three or four masonic jewels, by way of medals, and slung at the bottom my pocket Bible; after which my costume was completed by a college cap; and thus arrayed I mounted my palfrey and sallied forth. My two djiguitts went in front, preceded by a whole bevy of officials, and the two interpreters came after. Of course I looked at the people as we passed through the streets. Need I say

that they looked still harder at me, doing my utmost, as I was, to keep my countenance? The boys, not content with a passing glance, ran before, and kept turning round to look, and, in the bazaar, buyers and sellers stopped their bargaining in order to gaze. All went well, however, and we reached the citadel. This is a large artificial mound, surrounded by high clay walls, having an imposing gateway, with a chamber above, and a tower on either side. A number of troops were drawn up, who received me with a salute, and we dismounted to be received by two officers at the entrance, one of whom took charge of my presents for his master. We then crossed the first court, and, on entering the second, I caught sight of his Majesty, at a distance, through an open door.

Of him I had read various and somewhat conflicting accounts. Of his father, Nasr-Ullah, there seemed to be but one opinion, and that about as bad as it could well be; but of the reigning Emir, Seid Muzaffar-ed-din, Vambéry, in 1863, spoke rather favourably.

For my own part, I heard stories from Russians and natives alike, to which I shall hereafter refer, that in a manner confirmed both the bright and shady sides of the Emir's character. Meanwhile, knowing that the man I had to deal with was a despot, and remembering his power to hinder or advance my journey, I was naturally anxious for a favourable interview. I wanted in the first place to extend my travels into parts of the khanate that Dr. Schuyler was not allowed to visit, next to distribute among the Bokhariots my remaining copies of the Scriptures, beginning with the Sovereign himself, and, lastly, I wished to search for manuscripts, and to get all the general information I possibly could.

The Bokhariots have a poetical conceit that a stranger, on being admitted to an audience with the Emir, is so overwhelmed with the brightness of his presence, that he needs an attendant on either side to

support him from fainting. I fancy that intercourse with the Russians, who, as conquerors, do not stand upon such nonsense, is breaking down the custom, or perhaps the attendants did not think me a fainting subject. At all events I have no recollection of being supported into "the presence." The courtiers began to bow immediately they turned the corner of the court from whence his Majesty was visible. I had received the hint, however, that I should act as if being presented to my own or the Russian sovereign, and I accordingly reserved my bow till I entered the audience chamber. It was a good-sized room, carpeted all over, but without a stick of furniture, except two roughly-made deal chairs with crimson seats. The Emir was perched on one, and, after giving me a feeble shake of the hand, he motioned me to the other. I had seen his portrait at Tashkend, photographed, I think, in 1874, and from which, I presume, the engravings have been made; but as I had heard his Majesty spoken of as an old man, I expected to find him grey, whereas his hair was black, and, though apparently in debilitated health, he looked, thanks perhaps to cosmetics which he is said to use freely, less than 58, which I heard was his age.

When I had seated myself, Mr. Sevier and Yakoob stood in front, a few courtiers being behind. The Emir began by saying he had heard that I came from far; he was glad that I had come, and hoped that I had recovered from fatigue.

I thanked him, and said that the Russians had given me permission to go to Petro-Alexandrovsk; would he be so kind as to direct that my tarantass should be taken to Charjui, and then floated down the Oxus?

"Yes."

I then said, "I am an English mullah, and can read Hebrew and Greek. I should very much like to be allowed to see what ancient manuscripts there may be in your Majesty's library."

Answer : " He had heard that I was interested in antiquities. I might, therefore, search for them where I pleased, and have any I could find ; and his men would help me."



SRID MUZAFFAR-ED-DIN, EMIR OF BOKHARA.

Thus far, all promised well, and I went on to say that I had seen prisons and hospitals in many parts of the world, especially in Siberia, and that I should like to to be allowed to see those of his Majesty's dominions.

Here I suppose I "put my foot in it," for I received no answer. In asking Russians the kind of presents that would be suitable for the Emir, I had been especially advised to offer articles that would be *new* to him. I was not too well supplied with such things, for I was not sure, on leaving England, that I should get into Bokhara, nor had I previously travelled in countries where money was not generally regarded as the best of presents. When, however, no reply came to my request, I pointed to the scarlet raiment on my back, telling his Majesty that such a decoration was worn by our chief mullahs in England; that I had heard he was a mullah, and that I should be gratified if he would accept my Doctor's hood; and then, to make quite sure that among my presents there should be something decidedly new, I added the masonic collar and jewels! He seemed at first not to understand me, until, having called in the aid of his own interpreter, he replied, "Yes"; and again there followed a painful silence.

I was beginning to think him provokingly uninquisitive, and inquired whether he had any questions to ask about England.

Again there came no answer, whereupon I rose.

Then he said he must consider. Did I mean about England, or about my travels?

I answered, "Whichever your Majesty pleases."

"What, then," said he, "is the aim of your travels?"

"Primarily," I answered, "to distribute good books in prisons and hospitals; but, besides that, I am interested in antiquities."

"Now," said he, "I understand your object."

I handed him two of my letters, with accompanying translations in Turki, but he hardly glanced at them, and rather impatiently, I thought, put them aside. We then shook hands, and all literally "backed out" of his presence. We had been told beforehand that refreshment would be provided, of which we partook,

in the room of the chief ministers. They said we ate too little, and asked about my costume, as one of them had been in Belgrade, the very town where my vest was purchased. They had no prisons worth seeing, they said. They used to put prisoners in the stocks, but not now. They were curious to know what were the books we had given to the Emir; they understood our giving books in "the hospitals to cure the sick, but had we, besides, any medicine?" I gave presents of rings and a pocket microscope to these ministers, for which they said they had nothing to give in return; but they soon came to tell me that the Emir had looked at my presents, and thought them very curious, and, further, they brought into the room to me, as a present, at least a score of changes of raiment, for myself and retainers. These were the robes of honour, or *khalats*, of which the Russians had told me the Emir would give enough to "bury me." Some were of cotton, of gaudy colours, others of native silk, some few of Russian brocaded satin, like the Russian priests' vestments; one or two were of Cashmere, and another of pea-green velvet to envelop me from head to foot! This, however, was only the beginning of favours, for I was next informed that the Emir had sent me a horse for myself, and another for whomsoever I pleased. Nor was my charger sent without saddle or bridle, for it had both, as well as a saddle-cloth, covering him from mane to tail, and hanging down on either side, two feet from the withers and three feet behind. The saddle-cloth is the handsomest I have ever seen, and is of crimson velvet, embroidered with gold and silver thread and silk of various colours, in seven large foliate patterns, surrounded by a scroll border of similar workmanship, and edged with wide amber and crimson fringe, the whole being adorned by spangles of silver and gold.

The bridle, too, is no less remarkable, being mounted with bosses, pendants, and ornaments of turquoise

cloisonné work. At the back of the head, on the neck, rests a plate of turquoise work, from which hang on either side 8 strips, similarly jewelled, the reins being of white leather. One of the bridles is now in the British Museum.

I suppose that, had I been an Asiatic, I should have been clothed with one of these robes of honour,* and mounted upon the horse to ride through the street, "like unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour";† but I was excused from this, though the trappings were left on the horses, that the people might see, they said, that I had received a present, whilst "the changes of garments were laid upon his servants, and they bare them" (with the horses walking) before me.‡

It was well, perhaps, that I did not mount my present, for subsequently gay clothing was found to cover but sorry steeds, and one of them was so vicious that none liked to get near him. One horse was an Arab, 8 years old, the other a Karabair, the two together being valued at £8! We had now done the honours, and were told that we might proceed if we wished; and upon my expressing a desire to hasten forward, the Emir sent us his carriage, drawn by a pair of horses, in which we drove through the market-place, out of the town towards Shahr, and arrived before evening.

* I saw this done on the following day. When sending a watch and chain to the Bek of Shahr, by the hand of Yakoob, the Bek threw over my messenger's shoulders a gaudy robe, in which Yakoob came parading back, thus illustrating, I suppose, the case of Mordecai, who "went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white" (Esther viii. 15).

† Esther vi. 11.

‡ 2 Kings v. 23.

CHAPTER XXV.

FROM SHAHR TO BOKHARA.

Historical associations of Shahr.—Visit to the Bek, and his inquiries concerning Kuldja.—Information from courtiers.—Return of certain presents.—Untrustworthiness of Bokhariot statistics.—Departure from Shahr.—Visit to Bek of Chirakchi.—Handsome guest-house.—Visit to public bath.—The slave trade in Bokhara.—Visit to Bek of Karshi.—Mosques and synagogues.—Our departure from Karshi.—Kishlaks of semi-nomads.—Khoja-Moburak.—Scamper on my horse “Diotrephes.”—Kakir cistern.—“Unfurnished apartments” and oven.—Karaul bazaar.—Lake Kunja.—Stay at Chitarik.—Approach to Bokhara.

THE carriage that took us from Kitab had been sent from Petersburg by the Emperor as a present, and no one but the Emir had the like in Bokhara. It was not surprising, therefore, that the people gazed hard at the two Englishmen in plain clothes seated in the royal chariot. The distance between the two towns that make up Shahr-i-sabz (pronounced Shakhr-i-sabz) is only four miles, and the route lies through gardens and fields edged with trees, crossing about midway the Ak-daria, an affluent of the Kashka-daria. We soon saw that the people knew far less about driving than riding. Draught horses, they told us, were rare; hence the Emir had lent us two artillery chargers, somewhat large and heavy, and attached to our delicate carriage by ropes intended to draw a cannon, whilst each horse was mounted by a turbaned postillion, who, as he walked or at most ambled his horse along, kept

smiling at his fellow as if he thought the occasion a novel, if not an important, one. Hence we had a leisurely afternoon drive, and before sunset reached our destination. We were conducted to the house where embassies are received, in which was a large room carpeted, with niches in the wall, and a moderate-sized flower garden outside. We were told that the Bek would receive us in the evening in the Ak-Serai, a reminder that we were on historic ground.

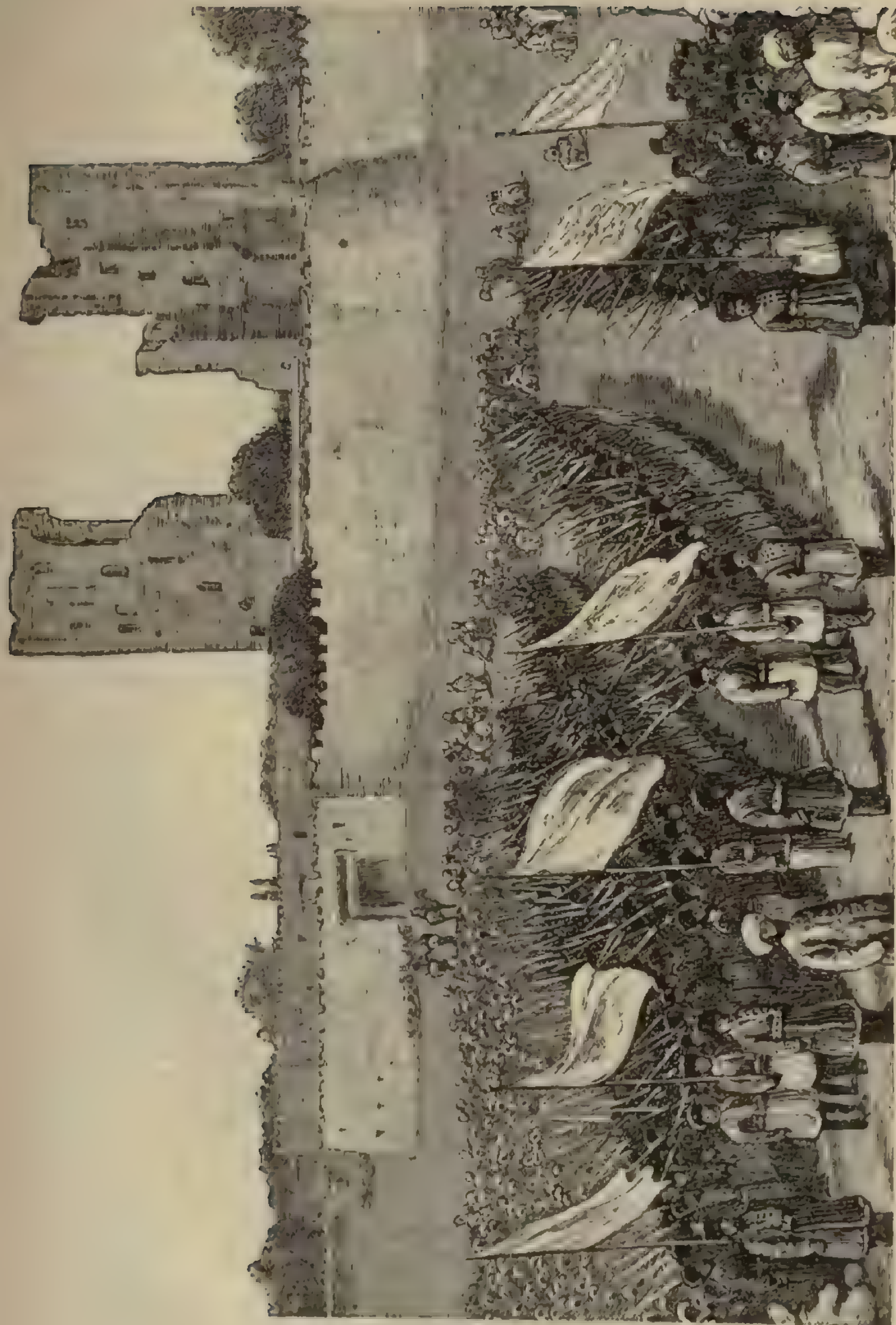
Accordingly, after sunset we went to visit the Bek. At the entrance to the citadel soldiers were drawn up, who presented arms, and we crossed the court where Tamerlane's feet must often have trod ; for there stood the ruins of two piers, solidly built of large bricks, of the famous Ak-Serai, or white palace, in which he used to repose after his campaigns. Their height is 140 feet, and their pure Arabic style and ornamentation in glazed tiles of blue and white porcelain, inlaid in arabesques, and Persian and Arabic inscriptions, make them striking objects. I was received in a spacious hall surrounded by mirrors about five feet high, and suspected that my reception had been deferred till after dark that I might be dazzled with the (supposed) magnificence.

The Bek, who gave me his name as Astanakul, *Parmanatchi*, signifying that he was one grade below the highest, sat near me at the table on which refreshment was served. There were also at the table Khoja Abul Fais, and the Emir's interpreter, who had been sent by his Majesty to amuse us during the evening, and I suppose also to learn of us what they could. The Bek was much more communicative than his sovereign, and asked if I had a father and brothers, but made no such inquiry as to mother or sisters, which, according to Bokhariot ideas, would have been unpolite. He wished to know my profession, and that of my father, and inquired for the health of my family. As he appeared to be so chatty, I took the

opportunity to ask him, and those at the table, many questions, and to jot down the answers I received. He gave me information also concerning my route, which was to be 60 miles to Karshi, 95 more to Bokhara, and 101 further to Charjui. I asked him to arrange, if possible, that our journey might be expedited, whereupon he summoned his scribe, who wrote a letter at his mouth, which the Bek authenticated, after hearing it read (not reading it himself), by impressing his seal upon it;* while the messengers went out to make preparations for our departure on the morrow. When the Bek heard that we had come from Kuldja, that was shortly to be given back to the Chinese, his eyes sparkled, evidently at the thought of the Russians having to disgorge some of their prey, and he inquired particularly how many Chinese there were in Kuldja, and how many versts westward the frontier had been fixed. Before leaving I presented the Bek with an Arabic New Testament, and a portrait of myself, whereupon he asked whether I had given the like to his Majesty. Then, to my surprise, they brought me a present, by desire of the Emir, from the Bek, of more khalats and another Arab horse with saddle and bridle, but not so gorgeously ornamented as the one I had received in the morning.

It was quite dark when our visit was over, and a crowd outside was waiting to escort us back with torches and lanterns. The Khoja and his interpreter accom-

* Like Shaphan, the scribe, reading before the king (2 Chron. xxxiv. 18), or like Mordecai writing letters, sealing them, and sending off messengers in the name of Ahasuerus (Esther viii. 8, 10). The Emir, not reading personally the letter I presented to him, recalls the words of Artaxerxes, "The letter which ye sent unto us hath been plainly read before me" (Ezra iv. 18, 23). The carrying a signet appears to have been customary with dignitaries in patriarchal times in Palestine, if we may so understand the case of Judah (Gen. xxxviii. 18); and later in Persia, for Darius sealed Daniel in the lions' den (Dan. vi. 17). So, too, in Judæa under Pilate, who "made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone" (Matt. xxvii. 66). We read of none of these affixing their sign manual, as it would be with us.



KING OF TAMERLANE'S PALACE AT SHAMER-I-SABZ, AND REVIEW OF BOKHARIOT TROOPS.

panied us to our lodgings, where we found a company of batchas, and the people assembled for a performance. I did not decline it, but gave the Khoja to understand that it would be a far greater treat to me than seeing the batchas if he would allow me to question him about the country. He and his interpreter were, I saw, intelligent fellows, and it was an opportunity not to be missed. When, therefore, the batchas were well started with their tomfooleries, we withdrew into the room to my table and note-book, but left the doors open so that we could see a little and hear only too much of the performance outside. I fear the crowd thought us sadly wanting in taste, and the batchas, determined that we should not lose all the fun, came every now and then putting their heads inside, and bawling, at the top of their voices, some portion of song for our special benefit.

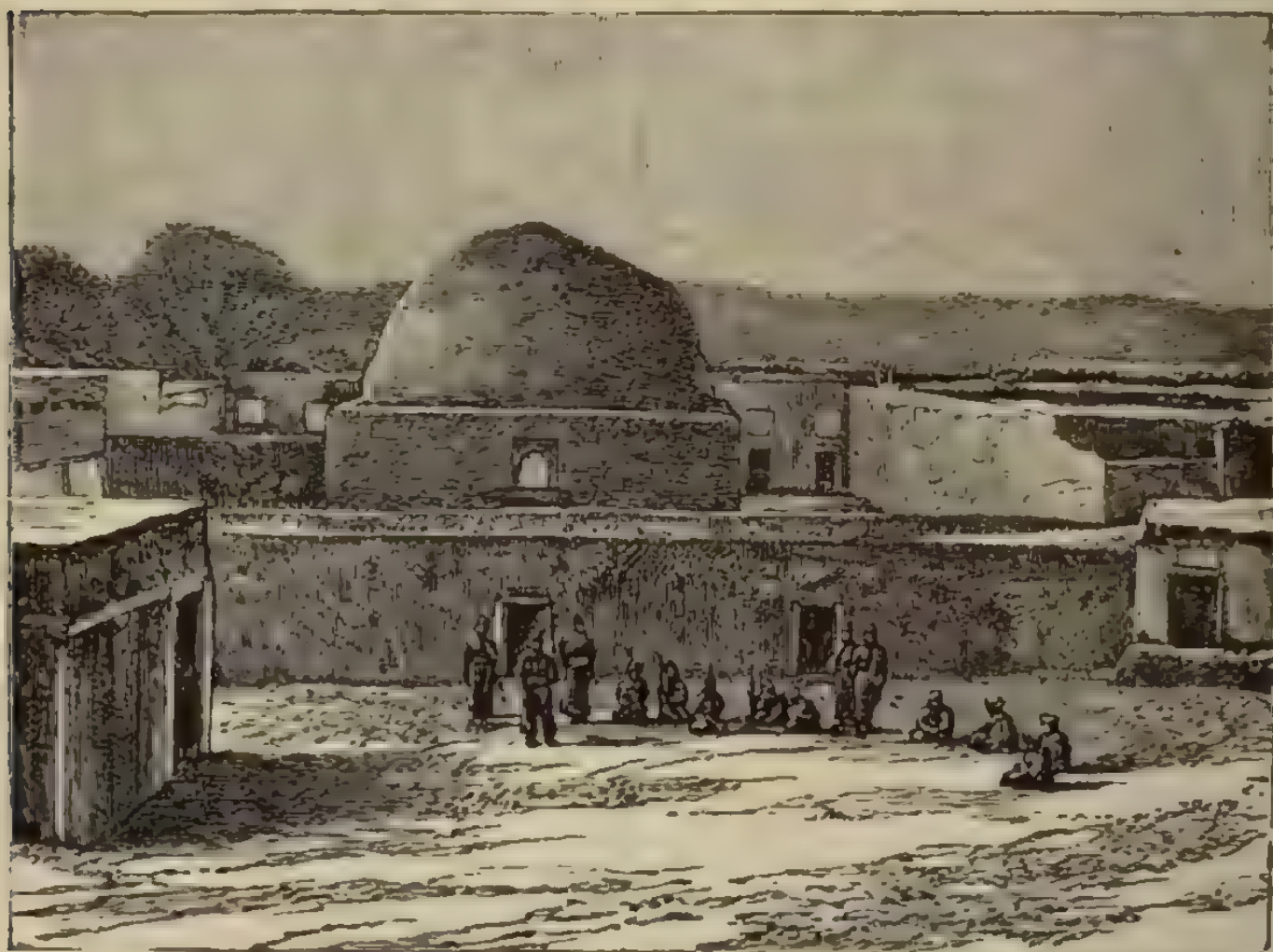
Among the messages sent me by the Emir was one that they delivered very delicately, and accompanied by some of my presents to him. The Emir feared that I should want again my hood, collar, and jewels, adding what was no doubt true, that I should not be able to get the like throughout his kingdom; and with regard to the illustrated book of travels, it was in a language he knew not, and he had looked at, but could not understand, the pictures. He hoped, therefore, I should not be offended if he asked me to take that back, but as for the religious books—namely, a Persian Bible and Arabic New Testament—he accepted and revered them. Here, then, was a rebuke to my worldly wisdom, for (to make confession for once) I did not feel at all sure how this Mullah-potentate, the chief champion of Islam in Central Asia, would be pleased at the idea of my offering him a Christian Bible. On the other hand, the book of travels was gorgeously bound, and full of pictures of his own khanate and of Central Asia, and I thought this would prepare the way for the religious books.

I suppose the real reason why he returned the book, with my portrait also, by-the-bye, enclosed, was because of the Sunni Muhammadan law against pictures. Vambery says that in Bokhara, in 1863, "the unhappy possessor of a portrait of a living human being suffered the extreme penalty of the law," so that his Majesty could hardly keep the pictures in defiance of his own regulations. I do not know whether the law about possessors of portraits has been relaxed. If not, I fear I jeopardized the lives of a good many, for I had taken with me a large number of cabinet portraits, because convenient to carry, and I gave them freely in the khanates. It was not till I was getting towards the end of my stock that I accidentally heard of the objection, and asked Yakoob what he thought would be done with the photographs. He expected that in many cases they would be destroyed. Nevertheless, good Mussulman as he was, I had by this time so far ingratiated myself with him that he seemed to wish for a memento, and, on parting, *asked* for my portrait for himself. Moreover, no one else but the Emir returned the present.

In the Emir's case, of course, I took back the things without hesitation, expressing the hope that I might be able to find something else to send in their stead (which I did on reaching Bokhara), and asking also the Khoja and his interpreter if there was anything they would like me to send them from England, to which they replied, with Oriental politeness, that they wished for nothing but to please me. I supposed I must have created a favourable impression upon the mind of the Khoja, for before parting he informed me that he was constantly in the presence of the Emir, and took his meals with him, so that, if I had any favour to ask, he was in a position to help me.*

* Reminding one of Elijah's words to the Shunamite, "Wouldst thou be spoken for to the king?" (2 Kings iv. 13); also of various courtly officers who were in "the king's presence"; as David, who

I had no wish to stay at Shahr, which is said to have 90 mosques and 3 medresses. I secured a photograph of the Court Mosque of Kitab, but it is an insignificant building. Dr. Schuyler suggests a population for Shahr of 20,000, and mentions 15,000 for Kitab. I am, however, exceedingly sceptical as to the accuracy of Bokhariot numbers, especially when they mount to four or five figures. I am persuaded



THE COURT MOSQUE AT KITAB.

that some travellers have supplied us with statistics of population in the khanate, which the Emir himself could not give if his life depended on it. One of the questions I asked at Kitab of my military informant

"sat with the king at meat" (1 Sam. xx. 5); "five men of them that were in the king's presence," taken by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings xxv. 19); and "seven men of them that saw the face of the king," taken by the Babylonian monarch (Jer. lii. 25); such as had ability to stand in the king's palace, among whom was Daniel (i. 4); and, again, the seven counsellors of Artaxerxes (Ezra vii. 14).

was the population of the khanate, but he could not inform me. The reader will therefore kindly bear this in mind in reference also to my own figures, supplied from information given by the natives.

The Bek sent early next morning to inquire about my health. His present of the previous evening had taken me by surprise, and having subsequently heard that his son was at the Emir's court, though not present when I gave presents to the ministers, I sent to the Bek a watch and chain for his son or any one else to whom he chose to give it. He threw a *khalat* over the shoulders* of my messenger, saying that he would send the watch and chain to his son, after detaching the whistle from the guard for himself, and sent me his thanks.

We left Shahr at 9.20 a.m. in the Emir's carriage, the road to Karshi lying through the Kashka-daria oasis. We drove slowly for an hour through gardens and cultivated fields, and then came to the open steppe, —sandy, but covered with vegetation. Not far from Shahr is the little village of Sharmitan, and six miles from the town is a second village, but we stopped at neither.

About a mile before reaching Chirakchi we were met by half-a-dozen gaily dressed, cavaliers, who said that the Bek, who was the Emir's son, had sent them to welcome me, and inquire after my welfare. They preceded us to the town, as the place must be termed, since it is surrounded by a wall, otherwise it might be taken for a *kishlak* with a large bazaar; and they informed us that, it being Friday, the Bek was gone to the mosque, but that on his return he would receive us. We called about two hours later, and found the Bek's house standing almost on the bank of the river.

* This giving of raiment reminds one of Jonathan stripping himself of his garments and giving them to David (1 Sam. xvii. 54), a custom that lingered in Europe in the sixteenth century, when the Tsar honoured Yermak, the conqueror of Siberia, by sending him a garment from his own wardrobe.

His residence is within a quadrangle, closed in with a high mud wall, and divided into smaller squares, in one of which a row of chambers stretches along the wall. On entering, an official first received my presents, and then we were shown into a room, where sat a youth of 18, but looking much older, dressed in a khalat of cloth of gold, with a pink turban, edged with gold lace, the grandest get-up I had yet seen, and far outdoing his father, whom we had found plainly dressed. He said that as they had been visited by no Englishmen before, he was glad I had come to see their country.

I asked if he would come to England.

"That," he said, "depends entirely on my father."

He had heard that I was fond of antiquities, and orders had been sent to Bokhara to find them if possible. I suppose, too, he had heard that I was an author, about which I made no secret, and, in fact, in this way explained why I was taking notes, which is a deadly crime in Oriental eyes, and soon laid me open to suspicion. I imagine, therefore, he had been primed to say what he afterwards added, namely, that he hoped I should say nothing against their country. I replied, and replied truly, that I should have a great deal to say about the hospitable manner in which I had been received.

I learned that a horseman had arrived from Bokhara from the Kush-beggi, having been only two days on the road. This made us long to be hurried forward, for we had that day accomplished only 13 miles, and were to go no further—a great contrast to our travel in the Russian Steppe, where we expected to do a similar distance in little more than an hour. Moreover, we were poorly lodged in a room about 12 feet by 8 feet, with bare mud walls, not even plastered, wooden pegs stuck in holes to hang our things on, and two rickety bedsteads; and also there was nothing in the town worth delaying our journey for. Chirakchi was formerly a dependency of Shahr-i-sabz, but is now

governed by this boy-bek, who, report said, spent his money prodigally, and grumbled at his father because, in his annual migrations from the capital to his summer residence at Kitab, he did not stay with his son on the way.

Several sons, some of them quite young, the Emir has distributed through the khanate as beks or governors of provinces, as at Chirakchi.* I observed, however, that this youth was surrounded with aged courtiers, who paid him the utmost deference. After our departure there was sent for my acceptance another caparisoned horse and khalats.

Next morning at 6.30, soon after sunrise, we started for Karshi, a distance of 47 miles, which I was determined, if possible, to accomplish that day. Several of the authorities accompanied us out of the town, so that our cavalcade numbered fully 20 persons, one of whom, an old man, asked if we could give him a little quinine, which I promised to do when we unpacked at the next station. Our road lay along the valley of the Kashkalaria oasis, descending from an altitude of 1,300 feet at Chirakchi to 800 feet at Karshi. Between Chirakchi and Karatigan the oasis somewhat thins off, but there is everywhere plenty of water, forage, and fuel. About two hours after starting we traversed low flat-topped hills near the river, with plains between us and the stream, and a few yourts surrounded by plots of cultivated land. Further on the road we passed through a better cultivated and more populous district. Wheat

* I presume that the one we saw is the same that Dr. Yavorski, when passing through in 1878, speaks of as the youngest son of the Emir, so that, if my information were true, the Bek could have been then but 14 years of age. The position and conduct of the Emir illustrates the expression in Psalm xlv. 16, "Instead of thy fathers, thou shalt have children: whom thou mayest make princes in all lands," and Muzaffar thus emulates the example of Rehoboam, who, desiring many wives, "dealt wisely, and dispersed of all his children throughout all the countries of Judah and Benjamin, unto every fenced city" (2 Chron. xi. 23). Also the youth of some of the beks, and the condition of Bokhara, is a commentary on Isa. iii. 4, "I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them."

and rice fields, cotton plantations and vegetable gardens extended along both sides of the road, whilst the winding river and the snowy summits of mountains in the distance helped to vary the scene. We passed two kishlaks on the right, crossed the river at the village of Karabagh, and were met about halfway to our destination by messengers sent by the Bek of Karshi. At a small place called Chim, or Sham, we stopped two hours for dinner, and then, driving on to within seven miles of Karshi, we were met by another messenger, who invited us to take refreshment, and provided some excellent figs. We then pushed on, and about 7 o'clock on Saturday night, 7th October, arrived at Karshi.

Here we were lodged in a guest-house worthy of the second town in the kingdom. Our room was large and handsome, with painted ceiling and wainscot, carved door and windows, a beautiful carpet, bed coverlets of silk, and a velvet pillow. Soon after our arrival the Bek sent to welcome us, and to offer an entertainment with batchas, but we replied that we were tired, and, having heard them twice, wished to get early to bed. It was then arranged that we should see the Bek next day, and since I intended to spend Sunday in the place, I intimated that one of us was a physician, and would be glad to be of use to any sick there might be in the town.

Early next morning we started for the bath, and on our way passed through what I supposed to be a part of the bazaar, where the line of shops appropriated to the wool trade is said to be nearly 600 yards long.

On reaching the bath-house I found almost a fac-simile of a Turkish bath I had seen in Constantinople. I had hoped that Sevier and I might get a private room wherein to undress—for this special reason if for no other, that I had around my waist a belt of money, which I preferred should not be seen even by my own native attendants. To my disappointment they

ushered us into a public place with a score or so of other bathers in various stages of *déshabille*. When, however, my wish to be alone was made known, the people were ordered out, and they ran off laughing and talking about the foreigners.

Even then, however, Yakoob and the djiguitts remained; so, seeing there was no help for it, I hid my belt in my clothes and entered the bath-room. It looked like a crypt lighted from the tops of domes, and, having placed myself on a hot stone, I had to submit to the well-known kneading and rubbing of the Turkish bath, previous to washing with water. I did not like it nearly so well as the Russian steam bath, though glad of an opportunity of a good cleansing, such as we had not had since leaving Samarkand. By the time we returned to the dressing chamber, some more natives had been admitted, and they watched us with not a little curiosity as we finished our toilette and put on our European garments. A tooth-brush appeared to them quite a novelty. I am not so sure about a comb, but, as all the men shave their heads, hair brushes are to them unknown.

Having returned to our house, we went after breakfast to call on Astanakul Bi, Bek of Karshi. He came into the courtyard to meet us. He was a man of intelligent countenance, dressed in cloth of gold and white turban, and who, when we reached the hall of reception, seemed somewhat under constraint, and formal in the presence of several older men standing around. I invited him to question me about England, and asked if there was anything he would like me to send him, but in both cases he answered in the negative. Thinking to draw him out, I told him of my travels, to which he replied that, to be successfully accomplished, such journeys needed brains, and then he added, "You are constantly on the move, and see many persons, whilst we sit still and see nobody." I told him he should come to England, but he replied

that without permission he might not so much as leave his bekship. I particularly asked that the remainder of our journey to Bokhara might be accomplished in two days, to which he replied that it rested with ourselves, and should be done. As we bade him farewell, he accompanied us to the fortress gate, where was said to be a prison, and he told us we might see it. We were conducted certainly to a room in the guard-house, with a fireplace and matting on the floor, lighted from above, which, if it were the prison, was tolerably good for Bokhara; but one native of our party thought that they were deceiving us, and that the real prison was underground. At the time I did not believe him, though my subsequent experience taught me that he was very likely right. They had no prisoners, they said, just then, the Emir on his last journey having released the few they had. Near the so-called prison was a guard-room, and on the walls were hung old firearms of unknown antiquity, one long blunderbuss affair being supported on legs, and fired with a fuse.

I had, as usual, sent a present to the Bek, and afterwards he sent me some loaves of sugar and boxes of sugar-candy; but the messengers said, in reply to my inquiry for the sick, that there were none! Thus we were disappointed of getting into the houses of the people, as we had hoped to do, to see something of their domestic life. I then asked to be permitted to visit the lepers' quarter, but this the Bek did not dare allow without the permission of the Emir. I next asked that we might be shown the town, thinking that we should possibly see some sick people, and also visit the Jews. Accordingly we were taken to see the chief medresses, of which there are four, and by a round-about road, outside the walls, we were conducted to a large mosque I have called in my note-book Kok-Chum-Bass, built 320 years ago by Mir Bika, who was made governor of Karshi by Abdullah Khan. It is the oldest building in Karshi, and is used chiefly

during the month of Ramazan, and the other great Muhammadan festival of Kurban, at which time the adjoining gardens are filled with people, who come not only to pray, but to feast and play. We rode through the gardens, but on approaching the mosque they requested us to dismount, though there was not enough within to repay one for the slight trouble, the nine stone vaults being very plain.

From this Muhammadan temple we asked to be conducted to a despised place, where the Jews meet to worship. It was hardly a synagogue, but rather a shanty, approached through a dirty yard, and the poorest place of Jewish worship I ever saw. It appeared that the Jews came to the town about 40 years ago, and there were usually only from 30 to 40 persons, and of these only 3 or 4 families resident. They had a few old and dirty, but not ancient, books, and I promised to give the man who received me a book in his own tongue if he would come to my lodging. Three came, to whom I gave two Hebrew New Testaments; one to a rabbi, who said he had not seen the book before, and kissed it.

In the evening the Bek again offered us amusement by batchas, but we declined on religious grounds, saying that it was our Sunday, and got off early to bed, intending to leave betimes the next day.

I directed on Sunday night that we should start from Karshi at sunrise, in accordance with which I stirred up Yakoob at 4 o'clock, but a delay arose in connection with the tarantass. The men had brought it from Samarkand through Jam, but their experiment of mounting it on an arba had not been a complete success. Fearing that their machine might break down, they had brought a second conveyance, and for some reason had been obliged to break my seals. As my parcels were in full tale, I paid the men off, as also the man who had accompanied us with the sumpter horse, and distributed to them, and to Yakoob and the

rest of my suite, presents and khalats. The difficulty that now arose was in harnessing our troika. Had I needed several scores of pack-horses for a large caravan, no doubt they could easily have been hired with saddles complete at a tenga per tash, or about a penny a mile ; for Karshi being on the high road from India, and all the imports from the south-east having to pass that way, the local provision for land carriage is considerable ; but to procure horse-collars and proper harness, not for an arba merely, but for a Russian tarantass, was not at all so easy. What was more, when the harness was forthcoming, no one appeared to know how to put it on, and this business took so long that we were not out of the city till nearly 8 o'clock.

In the suburbs we crossed a long bridge of nine brick arches, spanning the Kashka-daria, and had not got far when messengers came galloping after us, saying that the Bek had only just heard from the Emir that he was to give for myself and Sevier the presents they were now bringing. The gift consisted of pieces of silk and velvet of native manufacture, the latter remarkable by reason of its variegated colours and patterns. Sevier and I decided to ride the first stage, which was pleasant enough, for the road passed through the continuously inhabited district of the Karshi oasis. At first we kept beside the carriage, behind our own attendants and a cavalcade that escorted us from Karshi, but I soon became disgusted at our slow pace. The postillions seemed to have no notion of putting the horses to a respectable trot, and I foresaw that we should be a long time getting to Bokhara, unless I urged them on. Precept seemed to have no effect, so I determined to try the force of example ; and, setting at nought their notions of propriety that I should ride in state behind, I told one of the djiguitts to keep with the carriage whilst I galloped on and left them to follow, and thus we reached Kassar.

Kassan is a large commercial village, situated at the extreme western point of the oasis. Beyond Kassan the steppe begins, with vegetation, however, and kishlaks here and there—one of them, Maïmene, being the residence of the *Amliakdar*, or tax-gatherer under the Bek. Together with the Kashka-daria the gardens also disappear, so that we continued on a flat, bare, and waterless steppe, the scrubby vegetable growth consisting of clumps of Issirik grass, used by the Bokhariots for all diseases, and sold in their bazaars. They dry the grass and burn it on coal, the sick man or animal inhaling the smoke. In passing along from Karshi we had seen what I judged to be good specimens of kishlaks, or winter habitations of semi-nomads, for in some cases the whole collection of houses appeared to be deserted, and we were told that the inhabitants were gone to the mountains for the summer, whilst in other cases cultivated places were seen, with the people living by in tents.*

At Kassan, where we arrived about midday, and rested for a couple of hours, we obtained two fresh horses, but the third had to go further, our troika being mounted by three turbaned riders. Sevier and I got into the tarantass for the next stage, and after proceeding about half the distance, we passed Kara-Kum, where is, I think, a dry well, as also near, on the left, the ruins of the town Maimanak. We had no trotting until we approached Khoja-Moburak, which

* It is interesting to note in the book of Genesis how naturally the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, pass from nomad to settled life. We do not read that the first ever built a permanent dwelling for a house, but lived in a tent—a nomad pure and simple (unless *בְּקֵרִית אֶרֶבֶט* Gen. xxiii. 2, points to the contrary). Lot, on the other hand, seems to have forsaken the tent on settling in Sodom, so that, when driven by fear to the mountain, he dwelt in a cave, and not in a tent (Gen. xix. 19, 30). Isaac in middle life perhaps had a house (xxvii. 15), like a semi-nomad, and he appears to have died a settler in a town (xxxv. 27). Jacob was “a plain man dwelling in tents” when young (xxv. 27), but on returning from Laban he built a house (xxxiii. 17), though not forsaking the tent (xxxv. 21) till settled in old age in his patrimony, whence he sent out his sons to tend his flocks (xxxv. 27; xxxvii. 14).

we reached at 6.30, and found it a village of 60 or 70 houses, affording a resting-place for caravans between Bokhara and Karshi. I cannot say that I was satisfied with having accomplished 36 miles only for a day's journey, and I therefore desired that we should go on to the next station; but our escort said the horses were too tired, and, indeed, the men appeared horrified at the notion of travelling by night in the steppe. I thought at the time this was only an excuse, but experience taught me further on that "perils of robbers" was here a thing by no means to be risked.

The chief man of Khoja-Moburak came out to meet us, and conducted us to a poor but nicely-carpeted lodging, where our room measured about 12 feet by 8. Here I nearly had an accident, for taking a light to get something out of the tarantass, the man to whom I gave the candle to hold, set fire to the cotton lining of the apron, which fortunately I managed to extinguish quickly, or we might have had serious loss. The inhabitants, however, were determined that we should not suffer from either fire or pillage, for they set 10 men to watch the tarantass through the night, and I told Kolutch to sleep inside.

As we could not go further the first day from Karshi, I resolved, if possible, to start early the next morning, and was rewarded for turning out by getting my first sight, on October 10th, in the direction of the "Great Bear," of the beautiful comet of 1882, with its enormously expanded tail. The natives said it had been visible for the previous 20 days, and that the world was now coming to an end.* As we drove out of the miserable village of Khoja-Moburak we saw a beautiful sunrise over the barren steppe, and we jogged along a road destitute of anything green, until the postillions wanted, for some reason, to re-arrange their troika;

* Illustrating *Jeremiah* x. 2: "Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them."

whereupon Sevier and I mounted our horses for a ride. It was a magnificent morning. The wind was fresh, but not much laden with sand. The previous day had been hot, and my minimum thermometer had gone down in the night only to 55°; but at this early hour there was just so much of autumnal freshness in the air as to make it perfect for horseback travel.

My little horse had manifested a strong liking to get before everyone else in the cavalcade, wherefore I named him Diotrephes, and let him have his way. By this time, too, we understood each other pretty well, and I had got firmly into my seat. Upon giving my horse his head, Sevier came on, and Kolutch, not liking to be outstripped, joined in the run. So did several others, and away we scampered like a party of huntsmen. Soon we overtook a horseman, who looked round at our approach with dismay, for he had been sent on ahead to the next station to prepare for our coming. He trotted on after another horseman still further ahead, sent on a similar mission. This latter was a stout fellow, well advanced in years, who had packed on his horse a number of carpets and other things for our accommodation, on the top of which he had mounted. He had supposed, doubtless, that we should jog along in the slow fashion that is thought dignified by the Bokhariot officials; but when he discovered that we were upon his heels, he made the most frantic efforts to keep ahead. As seen from behind, the broad back and base of this individual, and his vigorous application of whip, had a most ludicrous effect, and we fairly roared with laughter. With the start he had, he managed to keep ahead for a time; but his whipping was vain, and he was outstripped.

A diversion of another kind now took me aside for a moment, for we saw off the track two small eagles sitting, which did not pretend to rise on our approach. I was minded to get as near as possible, and was

allowed to approach easily within pistol shot, and had a good view of one, but I had not my revolver with me, and so could not have secured a skin, even had I known how to dress it. We met only one or two horsemen during our five miles' run to Kakir, the distance being accomplished in 35 minutes, at the cost, however, of breaking in my saddle-bag a wide-mouthed bottle with prussic acid, fitted for killing moths.

Sevier and I, and a few more, had now reached Kakir, where is a *sardaba* or cupola-covered cistern, erected in the 16th century by Abdullah Khan.*

Besides the cistern at Kakir there is a large building that had served as a mosque, but was now used as stables for caravans. It seemed also to serve as a guard-house, for we saw several old matchlocks and firearms of a bygone generation hanging about. After the speed at which we had come we were hot, and it was grateful to turn into the cool corridors of what Kostenko speaks of as a house for the Emir in the event of his crossing the steppe. Already we had noticed raised platforms of earth by the wayside, on which we were told his tent was spread with that of such of his wives as were chosen to accompany him. On passing round the passage we came to a spacious chamber with four windows, which when properly prepared would serve for his Majesty, and, therefore, for ourselves. But as we had outstripped our forerunners, our "furniture" was not come, and we thus had the opportunity of seeing what an "unfurnished" room was like in the East, namely, four bare walls and a mud floor, the chief difference between a furnished and an unfurnished room being, under ordinary circumstances, that

* Burnes tells a story that Abdullah had made a pilgrimage to Mecca, but imbibed an idea that it had not proved acceptable to God, on account of which, and in order to propitiate the Divine favour, he set about the construction of caravansaries and cisterns in all parts of his dominions—a later Uzziah, who "built towers in the desert, and digged many wells" (2 Chron. xxvi. 10).

one was strewn with carpets and the other not.* The introduction of chairs and tables I took to be quite foreign. Those we saw had, for the most part, been made for us, or for Russian visitors, and it was not a little ridiculous on one or two occasions to see our chairs, stowed away with a man on horseback, going before to the next station. As for the tables, they generally consisted of boards put on rickety supports, and covered with calico. The moment we finally quitted apartments we had occupied, our carpets, rugs, etc., were folded up, and the room speedily "unfurnished."

Near the building at Kakir was a small bazaar, but it was not market day, and many of the houses were empty. I busied myself, therefore, whilst the tarantass was coming up, in looking about for objects of interest, and, among others, examined a native oven.†

When at length our carriage came up we had some little to do in starting with fresh horses, for one fell, and had to be taken out. Sevier and I preferred still to ride to the next station, the wind becoming stronger, and our horses being not too tired for another gallop. Yakoob had picked up for us, without my directions, a ragged hanger-on, whom I supposed to be going to Bokhara on his own account, but glad to do so on one of my spare horses, as a recompense for acting as groom and making himself generally useful. This fellow had mounted the savage horse given me by the Emir, and we had a short race; but I soon found that the long-legged creature, vicious as

* This seems to me to throw light upon, though perhaps not exhausting, the meaning of a word in Luke xxii. 12, "He shall show you a large upper room furnished" (*ἑστρωμένον*) or literally "strewed."

† It recalled to my mind two passages of Scripture, being like an earthenware crock, laid upon its side and built about, except in front, with earth. Into its mouth was put the parched grass or other fuel (Matt. vi. 30; James i. 11). Yakoob explained to me how they bake the bread; namely, by making cakes of dough about the size and thickness of a captain's biscuit, and then clapping this on the side of the oven, where it sticks till one side is done, the same process being repeated with the other side. Hence a half-hearted person, as "Ephraim, is a cake not turned" (Hosca vii. 8).

he was, with a rider who knew how to manage him, could hold his own, and more, against Diotrephes.

After passing Kash-sardaba, and some distance before we reached Karaul Bazaar, we saw the latter building standing out against the sky like some lofty Russian cathedral, or medresse. This also was built by Abdullah Khan, for his soldiers, and intended for the great central caravansary of the Karshi steppe. It was used as a guard-house, whence escorts were provided for passengers and caravans. Dr. Schuyler, in 1873, was provided with a guard in this place, and we heard that 30 soldiers are still kept on the spot, but we neither asked for, nor received, any addition to our company. We saw several old firearms hanging at the entrance, but not promising much help to a besieged traveller. The principal building consists of a square court, surrounded by cloister-looking corridors with vaulted chambers, surmounted by low domes. From within the court are seen four lofty *façades*, on which there still remain a few coloured bricks to testify of departed grandeur, but the entire building is fast going to ruin.

Near the caravansary is a cistern with what is said to be good water, and also a deep well of brackish, disagreeably-tasting water, to which they were letting down skins to fill, and hauling them up by four men walking away, and drawing the rope over a round piece of wood at the mouth of the well. There were also some small houses, in one of which we made a light meal, and then I insisted on proceeding, so as, if possible, to get to Bokhara that night, a distance of 26 miles.

But the character of the steppe changed, the soil became stony and sandy, and all vegetation completely disappeared. We were in a desert pure and simple ;*

* Witnessed to here and there by the bleached bones of horses and camels fallen and left as meat for the fowls of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth (Jer. xvi. 4), to which the eagle flies, hastening to eat (Habak. i. 8).

sand, sand everywhere, and blowing withal in our faces, so that we were glad to get into the tarantass, and shut it up closely to keep ourselves from being covered. This kind of steppe continues over some high ground and beyond the ruins of Sarai-Mama-Jugarta, and onwards to the salt lake, from whose shore there continues a salt tract almost up to Bokhara. From the high ground of Mama-Jugarta to Bokhara is only 11 miles, but my hopes of getting there that night were to be disappointed, for it was not till 7 o'clock we came to Chitarik, where a djiguitt from the Kush-beggi came out from Bokhara to meet us and apologize, saying that they had received the letter from Karshi to announce our coming only that day at noon; and hence the poor reception made for me at the last two stations. I had, however, put this down to my own perverseness in getting ahead of those sent forward to prepare for my comfort. At Chitarik we were put up for the night, and our host brought forth at our evening meal a rather pretty china plate. I had the curiosity to look at the bottom, and, to my amazement, saw written in my own tongue "Real Ironstone China."

The temperature fell during the night to 55°, and at 7.30 we were again on the move. The salt tract soon ceased, and the country began to show signs of life and cultivation. After 5 miles of travel we came to the village of Kagan, where the Bokhariot oasis begins. Although we had not long since breakfasted, we were expected to stop here for tea and refreshments, partly also, I fancy, because our nimble movements rather outran the local arrangements. Henceforward, for the remaining five miles, we drove through fields and gardens, till we stood before a city with a wall great and high, having 11 gates, rigorously closed by night, which city, when I had entered, I found one of the most interesting, and certainly the most curious, I have ever seen.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE CITY OF BOKHARA.

The late Emir Nasr-Ullah.—Visit of Burnes to Bokhara.—Stoddart sent as British envoy.—Concurrent Russian missions.—Conolly enticed to Bokhara and imprisoned.—Stoddart and Conolly killed.—Brave journey of Dr. Wolff.—My entry into Bokhara.—Its ancient appearance and customs.—Sumptuous lodging and garden.—Bokhariot fruit-trees and horticulture.—Desire to mount a minaret.—Paucity of Russian inhabitants and their treatment.—Visit to the medresse Kokol-tash.—Dancing-boys dressed as girls.—Misinterpretation of an English song.—Slumbers disturbed by watchmen, dogs, and military parade.—Service in the *Jumma* mosque reminiscent of temple worship in Jerusalem.—A Hindu temple.—Gallop round the walls.

NOT a little of the interest attaching to the city we had now approached is connected with Nasr-Ullah, father of the present Emir, whose name was well known forty years ago in England in connection with those of Lieutenant Burnes, Colonel Stoddart, Captain Conolly, and Dr. Wolff, as also with the names of others who proceeded to Bokhara from Russia. The mutual rivalries of the two nations at that time gave the affairs of Bokhara a wider interest than had been previously felt in Europe. The first English officer who entered Bokhara was Lieutenant Burnes. He travelled as a private individual, but with documents showing that the British Government was interested in his good treatment. He was suspected, of course, and forbidden to use pen and ink ; but on the whole, thanks to the court officials, he was kindly received, and on

reaching England published, in 1834, an account of his travels.

Russia and England were for some time intriguing at the Persian court, whence the British Ambassador deemed it prudent, in 1838, to send Colonel Stoddart as an envoy to Bokhara to endeavour to stop the pillage on the Persian frontier and the capture of slaves, to release any Russian prisoners he might find at Bokhara, and to make a friendly treaty with the Emir. On his arrival at the gate of the city he was received with distinction; but when, soon after, he refused to conform to local usages and etiquette, rode his horse in the Righistan, which none but the Emir then might do, did not dismount when his Majesty passed, and finally, when about to be presented to the sovereign, he knocked down the master of the ceremonies, who presumed to feel if he had arms concealed;—after all this the Emir had him let down to an underground prison, 20 feet deep, and kept him there for two months, with two thieves and a murderer. On the second day the executioner descended with an order from the Emir instantly to kill the Englishman if he did not embrace Islamism. Stoddart made the profession of faith; but at the end of two months, being removed to the house of the Mir-sheb, or head of the police, he announced his return to Christianity, and that his avowal of Islamism was forced from him. He was now informed that one Naib-Abdul-Samut, once in English pay, but expelled from India for his crimes, and now lieutenant to Nasr-Ullah, had been the principal cause of his imprisonment, having represented him to the Emir as a spy. During 1839-40, Stoddart was alternately in prison and in favour, and after his third imprisonment was removed to the palace, and then to the house of Naib-Abdul-Samut.

Meanwhile some Russians arrived at Bokhara under Buteneff, in company with Khanikoff, Lehmann, and others, charged to compass, among other things, if

possible, the release of Stoddart. On their arrival the Russian mission was treated very coolly by the Emir, but Stoddart was permitted to live with Buteneff. The Emir even offered Stoddart to return with the Russian embassy, but this he declined on the ground that he had not received orders from his government to withdraw. One principal reason that made the Emir so wavering was the alternation of success, and defeat of the English in Afghanistan at that time. Matters were further complicated in 1840 by the arrival of the English officers, Abbott, Shakespear, and Conolly, at Khiva. Conolly was ordered to explore Khokand, and apparently also to attempt to checkmate the Russian advance thither. He travelled north of Bokhara, but on receiving a letter from Stoddart, inviting him to go there, he determined, contrary to the advice of his Khivan and Khokandian friends, to go to Nasr-Ullah's camp, and try to persuade him to join with the Uzbek princes in a league against Russia. The Emir wished to gain possession of Conolly, and at once made him prisoner in the house of Abdul Samut, where he was joined by Stoddart.

The Emir now became very hostile to the English, from whom he thought he had no longer anything to fear, and embarrassed by requests from Persia, Khiva, Constantinople, Cabul, and Herat, for the release of his European prisoners,* Nasr-Ullah determined to put Stoddart and Conolly to death, which he did on the 24th June, 1842.

A vague report of this reached England, but much uncertainty hung over the matter for some time, whereupon Captain Grover, a friend of Stoddart's, determined to go out to Bokhara to clear up the mystery, and had applied to the Government in London for official papers of protection, when Dr. Wolff, a Christian Israelite and English clergyman, who as a missionary had visited Bokhara in 1831, and, going on to India, had made the acquaintance of

Captain Conolly, issued a challenge, in July, 1843, to the "brave officers of England," that if one of them would accompany him, or even pay the expenses, and no more, of his journey to Bokhara, he hoped to be able to release the prisoners, whose execution he considered exceedingly doubtful. This led to the formation of a Stoddart and Conolly Committee, and in the following October Dr. Wolff started.

He went supported by letters from the Sultan and others, and on arriving was well received by the Emir, and Abdul Samut told him how and why Stoddart and Conolly had been put to death. The missionary then desired to return at once, recommending that an ambassador should be sent with him to ask pardon of the English Government, and also expressing a wish to redeem some Russian slaves, of whom he heard in Bokhara. Every pretext, however, was put forward to delay the stranger's departure, and, lodged in the house of Abdul Samut, this rascal tried every means possible to extort money from Dr. Wolff, besides doing his best to compass his death as he had done that of the two officers. At length, however, the brave traveller had permission to depart, and after escaping several attempts at assassination, robbery, and poison, he reached London in 1845.

I have a dim recollection, as a child, of hearing Dr. Wolff lecture on his travels—I suppose soon after his return—and a better remembrance as a boy of hearing him preach. How little I then dreamed that I should be the next of the Queen's subjects to enter the city of Bokhara! Yet, on October 11th, 1882, I found myself approaching the very gate by which I presume Burnes had entered 50 years before. The sight of the crenelated walls, 8 miles round, with holes through which archers might shoot, guarded by a thin clay defence, and supported on triangular beams, struck me as curious indeed for Anno Domini 1882. Everything, however, was in keeping therewith. It

was not like a street of Old London, erected in a modern exhibition, or an assemblage arrayed in ancient costumes whilst surrounded with 19th century furniture. There came out to meet us, from the Kush-beggi and his son, to conduct us with honour to our lodging, an array of dignitaries, of whom, *mutatis mutandis*, one might have said, These are the princes which the Emir had: "Azariah the son of Zadok the priest, Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder. And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada over the host: and Zadok and Abiathar the priests: and Azariah the son of Nathan over the officers: and Zabud the son of Nathan principal officer, and the king's friend: and Ahishar over the household: and Adoniram the son of Abda over the tribute" (1 Kings iv. 2—6; 1 Chron. xviii. 15). One of my difficulties was to distinguish "Who" from "Which" among these notabilities, for they were all so grand, and their Oriental titles of office were to me, of course, considerably "worse than Greek."*

What with our own djiguitts, however, one or two who had accompanied us all the way from Kitab, and the cavaliers who came out to welcome us, we mustered a pretty strong party. We had driven nearly to the city gate when it was suggested, Christians though we were, that we should leave the tarantass, and formally enter Bokhara on horseback—a change truly from the treatment accorded to Burnes, who, because a Christian, had to trudge about the city on foot, whilst his Muhammadan servants were mounted. Not the least objection was made later on to our riding in the Righistan, of the old law con-

* Dr. Schuyler mentions his being preceded at Shahr by men running on foot, as Absalom and his brother Adonijah each prepared 50 men to run before him (2 Sam. xv. 1; 1 Kings i. 5); but I do not remember meeting with an exemplification of this custom in Bokhara, nor of the Egyptian calling before a ruler, "Bow the knee" (Gen. xli. 43). I missed, too, among the many officers of the Emir, a cup-bearer, like Nehemiah (i. ii.)—the Bokhariot sovereign, like all Moslems, being a "total abstainer."

cerning which we were ignorant, and the Russians have sometimes administered a bitter pill to the Bokhariots, in that when embassies happened to be attended by a Jewish interpreter, the Russians do not, of course, suffer him to dismount.

Our cavalcade was marched through the streets, the carriage bringing up the rear, and djiguitts going before to clear the way. I supposed the one immediately before us to be in authority, for a woman, who was not, I think, fully veiled, happening to meet us, he appeared to rebuke her sharply, and she, poor creature, went and turned her face to the wall like a scolded child. Many rose to give our party the Muhammadan salutation, *Salaam aleikum*, in which, I presume, we, as Christians, were not intended to participate, for the Moslems do not thus salute Christians; but the Jews frequently bowed to us, and paid their respects with an uttered *Aman!* *

At length we reached the largest of the eight houses set apart for guests, and which proved to be, on the whole, the finest house we entered in the khanate. I was disposed to christen it "the house of Haman," † for it had been the residence of a fallen favourite, one Barat Bek, who, four years previously, was at the head of 5,000 troops, and had enriched himself by withholding their pay. Besides this he drank, and having had the batchas one night, he went out inflamed with strong drink, and insulted not only the people, but the Emir also. His master caused him to be bound and thrown into the Kana-Khaneh, the prison, I believe, where the English officers were confined, out of which the corpse of the man was taken 15 days afterwards, when it was found he had bitten himself to death.

On leaving the street to enter this good specimen of a Bokhariot noble's residence, we rode into a horse

* Reminding one of Matt. v. 47, "If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?"

† Esther viii. 1.

fountain in the midst. The side opposite the entrance was occupied by a raised platform, and four rooms *en suite*, and a fifth. The centre one was an entrance hall, in which, at the entrance, was a place for ceremonial bathing, with a chamber overhead; on the right was the room of the Bek, and on the left the one intended for his guests, whilst further to the left was a small sleeping-room. The other sides of the principal court were occupied by offices, and rooms for the Bek's officers and attendants. Also on one side of the women's court were two rooms with upper stories and an entrance hall, opening at either end into the court, or into a splendid garden, where near at hand was a pool with adjacent trees. Somewhat further off was a summer-house, surrounded by bowers of vines, groves of apricots, and clusters of apple, pear, pomegranate, plum, and fig trees, the whole watered by running streams from the Zarafshan. The Bek's own chambers, in which we dwelt, were very spacious, roofed with timber beams, and painted between in red, whilst over the numerous doors were trellised, but unglazed, windows, there being no glass windows in the city except in the palace.*

Though this "house of Haman" is sometimes without guests for two or three months at a time, it was in a good state of repair, our rooms were nicely carpeted, and our comfort closely studied. An old

* This building calls to mind the passage in Jer. xxii. 13—15, "Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work; that saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it is cieled with cedar, and painted with vermilion. Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar?" The manner, too, in which the Bek's apartments were cut off from those of his wives recalled the expression, "The king hath brought me into his chambers" (Cant. i. 4). I was given to understand that the Bokhariots do not spend their time continuously with their wives, so that a particular wife, when desired, is sent for to come to her husband's chamber. This is not the case, Yakoob told me, among his people, the Tatars of Kazan, who eat together, except when the husband has visitors.

secretary, one Mirza Muhammad Yusuf, appeared to be told off to watch over us—in more senses I suspect than one—and besides him there were sundry messengers to keep up communications with the citadel. As we had arrived in the morning I expressed a desire to see the Kush-beggi the same day, but he begged to be excused until the morrow, and *then* we might go out to see the city. Thus the Kush-beggi was giving us a mild repetition of the treatment we had received from his master at Kitab—for though we were guests, yet, disguise it how we might, we were also prisoners. I therefore made a virtue of necessity, set myself to explore every nook and corner of the premises, and then proceeded to a careful examination of our excellent specimen of an Oriental garden.

The first thing that struck me was the enormous size of the apricot-trees, standing like avenues of old English pear-trees, from 30 to 40 feet high, whilst in circumference the first I measured was 3 ft. 10 in., and the next 5 ft. 3 in., the latter being about 40 years old.

The vines in the Bek's garden were in some cases allowed to trail, and in others were trained to form colonnades, under which one might walk. In Bokhara are cultivated 13 different kinds, and of these we tasted several. A small, round, greenish variety, called *Kishmish*, was thought much of, but there were larger kinds, the berries of which measured from an inch to an inch and a half in length. The mode of cultivation, however, was to me more curious than their flavour. Towards the close of summer the bunches are enclosed in bags, and cut off later on to be suspended from the ceilings, and so preserved through the winter as food, but not pressed for wine. Of the manufacture of this I neither heard nor saw anything in Bokhara, unless it were to some insignificant extent among the Jews.

Having looked thoroughly at our well-stocked garden, we found that its far end almost touched the city wall. I was minded to climb up and look over, but was stopped by barriers and the swampy nature of the ground. We had, therefore, to make ourselves happy in confinement, and wish for the morrow.

Early on Thursday, the day after our arrival, the Kush-beggi sent messengers to inquire about my health, and to say that a considerable amount of business had arrived from the Emir; and, in consequence, that he would not be able to receive us till Saturday morning, but we might go to see the town. We therefore sallied forth on horseback, conducted by the court attendants and our own djiguitts.

I wanted much to mount some lofty building to get a view of Bokhara as a whole, and so, perhaps, by comparison, form an idea of its population; for as we were conducted through the narrow irregular streets, each successive one very like the last, it was hard to trace any plan in the laying out of the city, or to form any estimate of the number of its inhabitants. On approaching the *Manari Kalian*, or great minaret, I said that I wished to ascend it. This at once flurried my conductors, and at first they tried to put me off by saying "To-morrow." When I objected, they next said that the Emir had taken the key with him to Kitab. Upon this not satisfying me, they urged as an objection that if I went up I should see the women. Not thinking this very dreadful, I still urged my wish to ascend, telling them that if they knew how many of the fair sex there were in England who did not object to be looked at, they would not think I should come for such a purpose all the way to Bokhara. But they said it was contrary to their law. They would, however, send to the Kush-beggi. This having been done, the messenger came back to say that the Viceroy would send to the Emir for permission, and that if his answer should be favourable they would have to tell

all the women to hide themselves before I went up, as they had done on the last occasion when a criminal was taken up to be thrown down headlong.

Accordingly we passed on to the Russian *Sarai*, or warehouse, and other parts of the town, to present our few private letters of introduction. Since crossing the Bokhariot frontier we had not seen or heard of a single Russian of any grade or calling, nor, so far as I learnt, were there more than the two or three agents of Kamensky and of the Commercial Russian Company, with the wife of one of them, in Bokhara. It seemed almost like calling upon a fellow-countryman in presenting our first letter, to see Kamensky's agent in European clothes, and his wife, the one Russian female in all Bokhara, unveiled, and moving rationally about the house, and not like her oppressed and degraded sisters around. Very pleasant, too, it was, by way of relief from native-made dishes, to stay to lunch, and partake of a meal served in European fashion. We called afterwards at the office of the Russian Company, where I met, oddly enough, an Asiatic, upon whom I had called in Moscow. He had returned by Orenburg, and reached Bokhara some weeks before me. These Russian agents had not, seemingly, a very enviable post, for they are surrounded with Muhammadans, who at first were exceedingly abusive and insulting, not to say dangerous, in the streets, though matters afterwards improved. This improvement was no doubt traceable, in a measure, to European courage. If a Bokhariot chooses to insult, or even strike, a Hindu or a Jew, they must patiently bear it, as the natives knew, and accordingly tried the same with these Russians, though not with a like result; for the agents, without waiting for the interference of the authorities, took the law in their own hands, and administered a thrashing. This made the Muhammadans more careful; but, to show what arrant cowards the Bokhariots were, one of the agents said that on a certain occasion, when riding, his

horse became restive, whereupon a knot of ten natives frightened the animal and made it run away. Upon this the Russian returned to thrash them, and they set upon him, as he said, to kill him. My informant happened not to have his revolver, which he usually carried, but, taking from his pocket a telescopic aluminium pencil, he solemnly drew and pointed it at them, whereupon they supposing it to be some new infernal machine, ran away in a hurry!

We next went to see some of the medresses, or colleges: first to that called Kokol-tash, for 146 students, and built, they told me, about 300 years ago. I asked what it would cost to erect such a building in Bokhara now, and they thought £1,250.

On returning to our lodging we were entertained in the course of the evening with some native songs and music, as well as dancing-boys. One of the instruments resembled a guitar, 46 inches long, with a sounding-board 9 inches by 4, and might be played with a bow or with the thumb. Another instrument resembled the flageolet, and had something of the hautboy sound, or one between that and a bagpipe.

Yakoob had endeavoured to raise my anticipations by telling me that some of the batchas would be dressed as dancing-girls. Two of them did assume female costume, wearing a handkerchief round the head and falling down the back. They wore wristlets with tinkling ornaments, and carried small cymbals, wherewith to accompany the tambourines, took short, mincing steps, and shook their hands and heads with rapid motions, now holding up and extending their outer garment, and so somewhat immodestly dancing, and then kneeling and making motions towards us with their hands. Our choristers favoured us with some prayers or sacred songs in Tajik, one old man screaming up dreadfully high, after which, by way of *finale*, I asked them whether, as they had done their best to entertain us, they would like to hear a song

from me. Upon their replying in the affirmative, I wondered how best to hit their musical taste : whether with something sacred or secular, grave or gay ; for the words would in any case be lost upon them. I decided in favour of a rapid movement rather than a slow one, and, without remembering exactly all the words, I sang them "Twickenham Ferry," at the end of each verse of which comes the refrain :

"O hoi-ye-ho, ho-ye-ho, ho-ye-ho, ho!"

I also sang them another song, and had each time a most attentive audience, but was not a little amused afterwards to hear that they had detected the repetition of "O hoi-ye-ho, ho-ye-ho, ho!" and thought *that* must be a prayer! I wound up the proceedings by lighting a piece of magnesian wire, which caused them no little astonishment, as it had done at Kitab, and after this we retired to bed.

My slumbers, however, were not to be undisturbed, for first we were aroused by "the watchmen that go about the city," who had some dull imitation of a gong or bell wherewith to make us aware of their presence, and then there came into our principal court a howling cur, "returned at evening to make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city."* I sallied forth with a lighted candle, and drove out the dog, but was afraid of going too far in my queer *déshabille*, lest, being unable, if discovered, to give an account of myself in the vernacular, I might cause the natives to wonder what in the world I was about. The rules concerning keeping at home after sunset are very strict, and the night myrmidons in the pay of the *Mir-sheb*, or chief police-master (called *Kurbashi* in Samarkand), think little of

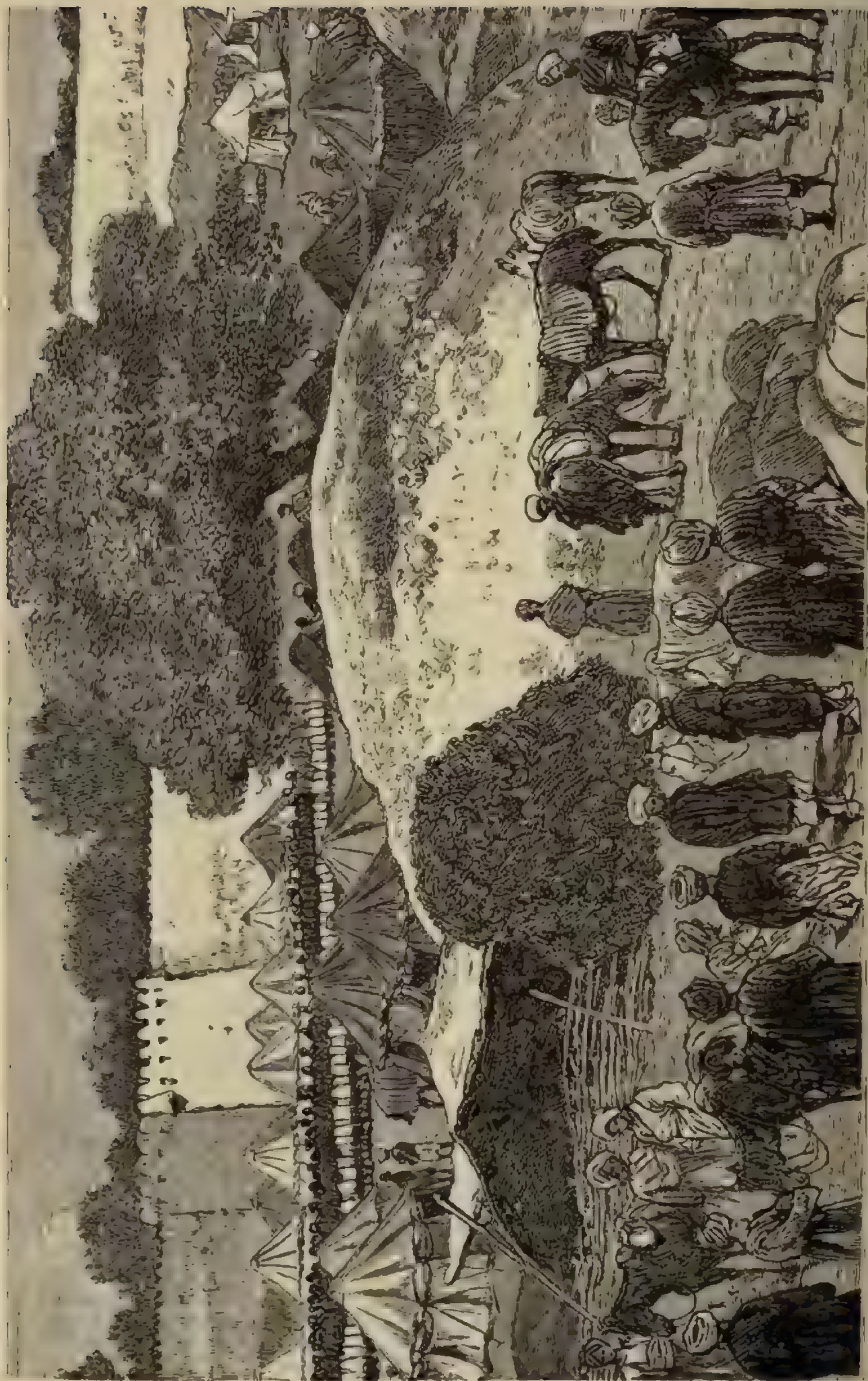
* Psalm lix. 6. I never had so lively an illustration of this last figure as in Constantinople, where every street was monopolized by ownerless dogs. They did not obtrude themselves much by day, but at night they are unmercifully severe upon any strange dog that trespasses into their particular streets, and are not too nice in barking at, if not even attacking, foot passengers.

dealing summarily with anyone found in the streets,* so much so that one of the Russians who had paid us an evening visit, and who left quite early, did not like to go home without one of the Emir's attendants to accompany him. Then, again, early next morning we were disturbed by bugle calls for the practising of the soldiers. Accordingly, when the messengers came after breakfast from the Kush-beggi to inquire after our health, and to ask if I had slept well, I replied that we had been somewhat disturbed by dogs and watchmen, but that on the morrow we should like to see the soldiers practise. Things were better afterwards as regards watchmen and animals, though as for my seeing the soldiers practise, they put us off by saying that the permission of the Emir must be asked, and pretended that they would exercise no more during our stay. Upon this I twitted the courtiers by telling them that they were ashamed to let us see their soldiers, and that I had heard how badly they were armed. They replied that it used to be so, and that formerly they were a sorry lot, "but now," they adroitly added, "we have seen and learned from the Russians, as the Russians did from the French and English."

I was curious to be present, if possible, at the preaching of a Muhammadan sermon at a chief function on Friday, which is the Moslem Sabbath. Upon inquiry, I was given to understand that the Jumma, or Friday service, would be held at noon in the great mosque, which, in theory, ought to be large enough to hold all the Mussulmans in a city. On the morning, therefore, of the day in question, I asked to be taken, and we sallied forth. I also wished to visit, I said, the synagogue and the Jews' quarter.

By this time I was fully alive to the fact that I was not to be allowed to see too much, and I learned that,

* Thereby illustrating "The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my vail from me" (Cant. v. 7; iii. 3).



from my continual taking of notes, I was suspected of being a spy.* Accordingly our conductors seemed not to be too well pleased at the idea of my seeing the Jumma service, and were leading us off first to the Jews' quarter, which would have brought us to the mosque when the service was over. I detected this, and insisted on going at once to the other building, and, in due time, we rode up to the great mosque Baliand, Buland, or Kelan. The front of it was ornamented with glazed bricks, some of which were fallen away, so that the colouring looked worn off. Near at hand was the tall minaret, said to be 200 feet high, ornamented with coloured bricks inlaid in elegant designs. It was the same that I had expressed a wish to ascend. I now looked round the base pretty thoroughly to see, if possible, where the entrance was made, but I failed, and my conductors were unwilling to further my wishes, and, moreover, began to scheme for keeping me from the service, by proposing that I should go to an upper story of the Miri-arab medresse, which faced the great mosque, and from thence look down upon the Jumma. I counter-manceuvred this proposal by saying that I would ascend to the upper parts of the medresse and see if that would do; for I thought, if they would not let me ascend the minaret, I might perhaps get an extended view of the town from the college, and so checkmate them. I went up accordingly, but found that the view was nothing for my purpose, since it overlooked merely the roof of the palace and fortress, and I therefore came down at once, saying that would not do, and, without further parley, entered the big mosque just before the service commenced. My conductors seemed anxious to put me out of sight, I suppose because I was an "infidel," and they would evidently have liked that, after peeping in, I should withdraw. But I was not minded so to

* A very old suspicion attaching to strangers in the East; said Joseph to his visitors, "Ye are spies" (Gen. xlii. 9).

do. Yakoob appeared to take sides against us, and urged that the people would look at us, and thus lose the benefit of their prayers. I simply replied, "Then tell them not to look!" This mild altercation was going on near a corner at the back of the worshippers, when suddenly the mullah's voice sounded. This put an end to all discussion, and the Emir's men, with Yakoob among them, went off to take their places.

Sevier and I were now left with Kolutch, who remained faithful to us, calling Yakoob somewhat of a hypocrite, because he had put on in Bokhara a white turban, and was manifesting Muhammadan zeal only to curry favour with the local authorities, whilst at other times and places he did not even observe the stated hours of prayer. As for Kolutch, I suspect that holding the office of a djiguitt in the service of the Russians had not strengthened his Muhammadanism, and, without our asking, he quietly wrapped up a garment for me to sit on, and we all three took our places against the wall, and quietly watched the proceedings.

This Jumma mosque is one of the most solid structures in Bokhara, and as I sat within I felt exceedingly glad that I had declined to be shut out; for the service was wholly unlike any form of Western congregational worship I had seen, and it suggested to my mind what, in some degree, may have been the ancient temple service in Jerusalem. The interior of the great mosque at Bokhara consists of a large unroofed, entirely open court, 300 feet square, and capable of accommodating, they say, 10,000 worshippers. It is surrounded by what Dr. Schuyler calls "a wide, vaulted cloister of brick, two and sometimes three aisles in width," but which I had put down as a succession of colonnades. They brought to my mind the Hebrew Bethesda at Jerusalem, "having five porches" or stoas.* In front of us,

* John v. 2.

and at the end opposite the entrance, was the *pishtak*, or tall *façade*, faced with coloured bricks, and surmounted by a dome over the two arches forming the sanctuary we had seen in other mosques, where the mullah prays; whilst in front of these arches, and standing a little outside, was a low structure which I supposed to be intended for a pulpit or reading place *

The service began on a long sustained note, uttered by a mullah from the sanctuary, upon which the men arranged themselves in ranks with strictest precision; all knelt, then rose and stood praying and bowing in silence. Some of the worshippers knelt in clusters of two and three, but always in a line. Looking under one of the covered stoas I saw a man whom I was uncharitable enough to fix upon, in imagination, as the Pharisee, "who went up to the temple to pray." He was clad in a crimson velvet robe, with the purest of white turbans, and had taken "a chief room in the synagogue," whilst a poor fellow with bare feet, whom I thought to be the publican, came in later, took a hindmost place, where, having no costly prayer-cloth on which to perform his devotions, he took off his upper coat, laid it on the ground, and so prayed "standing afar off." As for the behaviour of the congregation, I can only speak of it as *most* reverential. One or two did now and then look round at the infidel strangers in the corner, showing that Yakoob's fear was not altogether groundless; but their eyes were quickly withdrawn, and the service, as a whole, was, outwardly, far more decorous than that of an average Christian assembly, whether Anglican, Roman, or Greek.

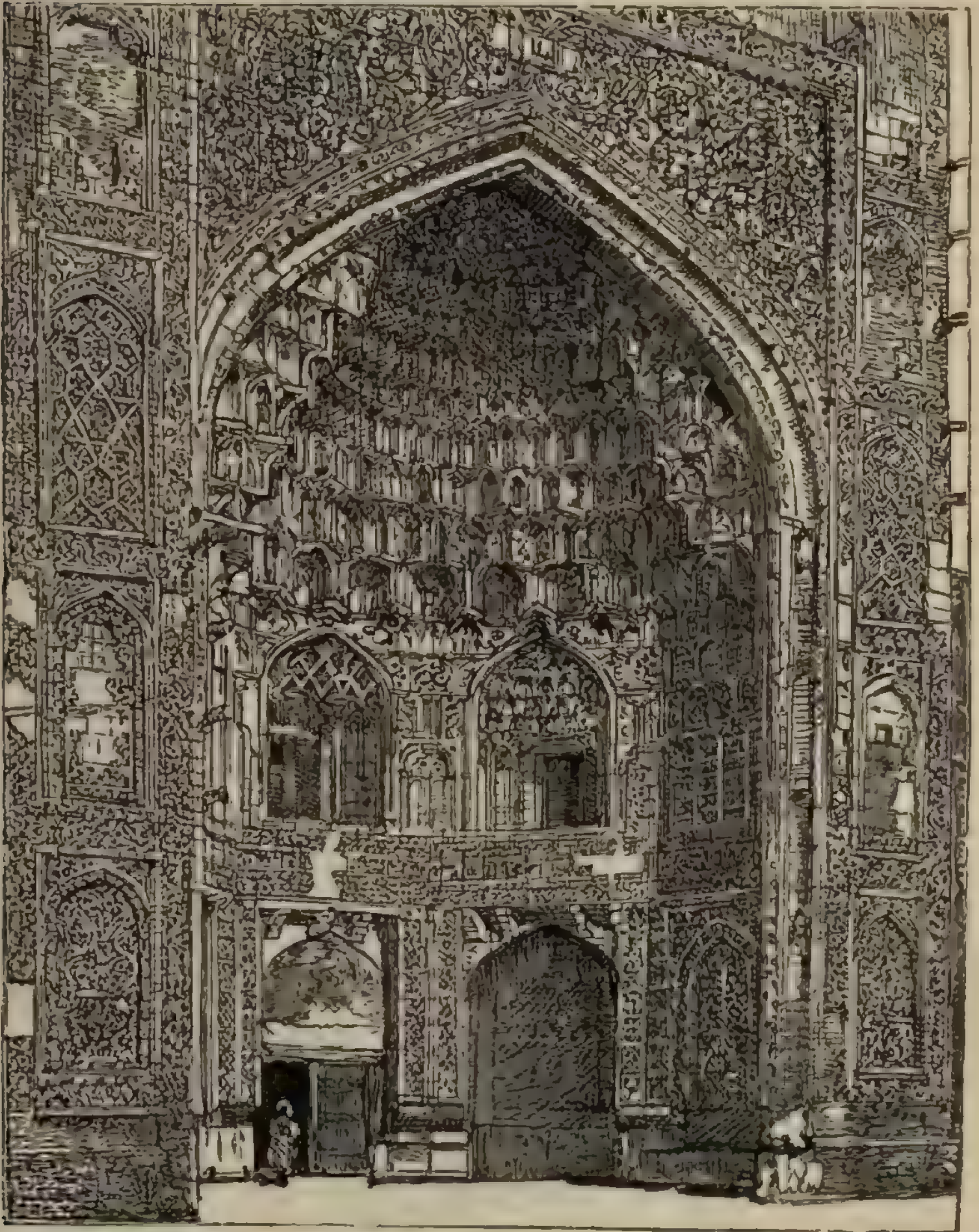
Although at the extreme end and out of doors,

* It was not "a high day" when we were there, and I estimated the number of worshippers as not exceeding 500, but one had only to imagine the people pouring into the city by thousands on a festival to be reminded of the place "whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord" (Psalm cxxii. 4).

as I have intimated, we could hear quite plainly the mullah's words from the sanctuary, and further on in the service some sentences were uttered by another mullah from under one of the stoas on the right, about halfway down. Again all the worshippers stood, then bowed down, and next prostrated themselves to the ground, after which I was told the "Jumma" was finished. Something else was to follow, which I did not make out to be of the nature of preaching, but rather of staying behind for private prayer. The great mass of the congregation began now to move, and with their faces towards the exit, of course they had a full view of the "infidels." The Emir's men were ready, not to say in haste, to take me off, but I had noticed one thing that I was anxious to inspect. It very much resembled a font, and, remembering that Nestorian Christianity had once been known in the land, I wondered whether this object could have come down from those mediæval times. Accordingly, I went up to, and looked around, over, and under it, if perchance there might be on it some Christian emblem or device; but whilst so doing I was quickly surrounded. the crowd looking, I fancied, not too well pleased, so that if ever I felt nervous in Bokhara, it was at that moment, for I thought they might misinterpret what I was doing, and set upon me, as, without provocation, a man assaulted and attempted to kill Dr. Schuyler while examining the shrine of a saint. I did not linger, therefore, over my inspection: but, seeing nothing that led me to suppose the basin to be of Christian origin, I joined my conductors, who took me out of a side door, sent to Fazul to bring our horses there, and hurried us off, seemingly glad to get us away.

There were some few other Muhammadan religious buildings we entered in Bokhara. One I have noted down as the Jumma mosque of Abdul Aziz Khan, said to have been built about 200 years, and to hold 2,000 people. There is also a medresse, named after that same

Khan. At the Mosque of Hazret Imlah, 132 years



MEDRESSA OF ABDUL AZIZ KHAN.

old, we saw the tomb of the great saint Imlah, where
on were two spear-heads, and above, a pole with a

horse-tail suspended. Lastly, at the Hazret Halfa Khu-daïdat was a covered cistern, where sick people drink the water for recovery. Pious turbaned Yakoob went down to taste, but, having so done, made a grimace, and said the water stank. We saw comparatively few monumental inscriptions, but at this well, over the door, it was written in Persian that the building stood 71 years, was then destroyed, and rebuilt 28 years ago.

We went afterwards to the Hindu Sarai, somewhat similar to the one we had seen in Khokand. At Bokhara the Hindus lie under the same disabilities as the Jews. They paint a red circle about two inches in diameter on their forehead—whether by compulsion or for glory and beauty I know not—and they wear the black calico cap and girdle of string. Their temple in Bokhara was carpeted, and we found therein a looking-glass, with a musical-box, a lectern, and a cupboard with books; but I doubted whether they had the freedom of religious worship that their co-religionists enjoyed in Khokand.

Since my guides had baffled me in mounting the minaret, whence I might form an idea of the area of the city, I determined to go round its walls, and, therefore, asked to be taken to one of the gates, keeping my counsel till I got outside the portal of the Saleh-Kaneh. Then I told my conductors what I wished to do, whereupon they began to raise objections; but by this time I was disposed to have my own way. So I gave my horse his head. Diotrephe had not had a gallop all day, and, after creeping through the crowded streets, was quite prepared for a run. Sevier, Kolutch, and Fazul followed, and we soon put space between us and the malcontents, among whom Yakoob stayed behind to curry favour, as we supposed, with the Emir's grandees. This galloping off was very undignified, according to Bokhariot ideas, but we enjoyed immensely the race and the pleasure of being pursued.

We passed the Kuale or Karshi gate by which we had arrived, then the Mazar gate that leads to the famous shrine of Boghu-eddin, on to the Samarkand and Imam gates, the Urlan or Uglan, and Talipaj. By this time the run had given a wet jacket to horses and men. The temperature had been rather fresh in the morning, and Kolutch had put on his best fur-lined khalat. This he now opened, and held up to show me how wet he was, and how his horse's sweat had damaged his garment. It became a question, therefore, how long we were to continue, for in about half-an-hour we had compassed 7 out of the 11 gates of the city, a distance of about 5 miles, and to continue our flight beyond the Talipaj gate appeared to require our making a *détour*. I decided, therefore, to re-enter the city, and to finish the circuit, if possible, on the morrow. We had met scarcely anyone in galloping round the walls, save one or two persons winding silk, and these looked not a little astonished at our headlong career. Kolutch, before the invasion of the Russians, had lived in Bokhara, and so was able to pilot us back to the embassy, where we had a wash, and calmly awaited the arrival of our custodians. Fortunately, the old fellow, into whose special keeping we appeared to be committed, took the thing pleasantly, and made the best of it. He even complimented us upon our horsemanship, but I said that we thought small things of anything we could do, being accustomed only to caper about in a riding-school, and one of us not that, but that we had heard the Bokhariots were splendid riders, to which he replied that anyhow we held in our horses remarkably well; and so the matter for the present ended, the old man telling us that he had followed us, inquiring at one gate after another whether we had entered. This was not the last unwilling gallop we gave the old gentleman, but we had immensely enjoyed our first, though not without some little fear of rebuke for our insubordination.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE JEWS OF BOKHARA.

My plans concerning the Jews.—Inquiry about the alleged persecutions in Moscow and South Russia.—Russia : how regarded by Western and Eastern Jews.—Oppressed condition of Jews in Bokhara.—Visits to their synagogue, and their sick.—Inquiry for Hebrew manuscripts.—Hints concerning their technicalities.—Wonderful manuscript of the Old Testament.—Fear of the Jews to receive us.—My letter to the Emir on their behalf.

I HAD looked forward with great interest to what I might see and learn in Bokhara of the condition of the Jews, and, in crossing Europe, had called on some of the rabbis, telling them of my intended journey, and my willingness to be of use, if possible, to their countrymen, though I was not sanguine that I could do much. “Ah ! that’s right,” said one old Israelite, “they are much oppressed in Bokhara, and stand in need of help.” I took occasion also, on some of these visits, to ask concerning the then recent persecutions of the Jews in Russia. I had been present at the Mansion House meeting in the early part of 1882, convoked on behalf of the persecuted, and had been favoured, as I have said, with a letter from the Lord Mayor as Chairman of the Jewish Relief Fund. This letter I showed, so that they might see I was in every way friendly to them and their cause ; yet I must confess that the accounts from the rabbis’ mouths relative to the sufferings of their people seemed much less than the newspapers had led us to believe.

To begin with Moscow. I was told how the troubles there began with the revival by the Minister Ignatieff of old regulations against the Jews, which the authorities had for a long time allowed them to break, though the laws had not been repealed ; and further, that the Jews had not suffered personal violence by order, though the police, in some cases, had hastened to drive away from the town some women among others who were sick, and unfit to travel, until a petition was presented to Prince Dolgorouki, the Governor, who thereon manifested his sympathy with the sufferers, and showed a desire to mitigate, as far as possible, the carrying out of the minister's edict. After this, things were less severe. At the same time it could not be denied that the Jews, in certain parts of Russia, suffered under many disabilities. I asked one Jew to tell me succinctly what these disabilities, or some of them, were. To this he replied, "A Jew may not trade in the interior unless a merchant of the first guild, or after being a merchant five years in the provinces. Jewish artisans may dwell in the interior with strangers' passports only, and not as citizens ; the police, moreover, allowing them to practise only their own trades. Again, suppose that a man has made a fortune, he may not buy a house and live in the interior. His wife might live there, and be a dressmaker, but if he remains unemployed, he must go away." By "the interior" is meant Petersburg, Moscow, and certain other localities where, the laws not having been rigorously carried out, many from the provinces had settled unrebuked, and the turning out of some two or three thousand of these people at the previous Easter had cost the Jewish community from £500 to £600 to send them to their former homes in the provinces. This, however, did not exhaust the list of *gravamina*. "If a Jew," my informant continued, "has passed the university, he may, in theory, enter the service of the State, but not

practically. For instance, only just before, an order had been issued by the Minister of War that among the military physicians the Jewish element should not form more than 5 per cent. Also, on the Exchange, a Jew could not be a broker, and the right to trade in spirits, or make them, is forbidden in the interior, even to Jewish merchants of the first guild. Again, in the interior, Ignatieff had lately ordered that a Jew might not be an apothecary, or manager for an apothecary. The same authority had forbidden the Jews in the west, for the time being at all events, to buy or even to hire land. Even in Moscow it appeared that the Israelites had not a piece of land of their own whereon to build a synagogue or a school, though this is allowed to Lutherans, and also to Muhammadans. Once more, by Russian law, if in a high school there is a certain number of Jewish children, a rabbi should be allowed to teach them; but this was forbidden in one large town at least that I heard of, and the rabbi not allowed to have them even at his own house. Lastly, the Jews have no rights as a community."

I have set down these things as they came to me from Jewish lips, without having had the opportunity of hearing of what explanation they may be capable, or what may be said to the contrary. As we were travelling, one gentleman was heard to say, "These English are greatly shocked about the treatment of the Jews in Russia; but it would not be so if they understood how the Jew money-lenders fleece the peasants when they get them into their hands." This was only an echo of what a Polish nobleman said, when I asked him, in Warsaw, why they disliked the Jews, and he replied, "Because by money-lending they get all power in their hands, and distress their debtors." To which I simply replied, "Then why go to them? The remedy is in your own hands. Don't borrow!" At the same time, it must be remembered that the Jewish element in Russia is comparatively

large ; and with reference to one prohibition, that of liquor, though the Hebrew is sober himself, he does not object to deal out for gain this curse of humanity, and there are parts where the Jews have got into their hands the grog-shops of the district to the great demoralization and ruin of the people. Whether, in their absence, someone else might not do the same, I am unprepared to say. I simply notice what I believe to be the fact. I met one intelligent Russian lady, who began to put things before me from the point of view of the Russian Government ; but, unfortunately, our interview was cut short ; and hence, personally, I do not consider that I have heard properly both sides of the question.

When, on my return journey in December, I reached South Russia, I inquired again of the highest authorities and persons most likely to know the truth, and they said things in Odessa had quieted down, and that there was no more persecution there ; further, that at the outset the people were not against the Jews, but that the authorities had made them hostile, and that whilst in Balta, Okna, Smeela, and New Prague, there had been much ill-treatment of women, it was not so in Odessa, where only one murder had been known. I heard, however, of one authority, the vigorous Prince Dondukoff Korsakoff, going into the streets himself in a riot, and punishing one persecutor with his own fists. English opinion in Odessa went to say that at the very first the newspaper accounts made things out worse than they were, but that the rectification of the error sent the pendulum too far in the opposite direction, and then the English people would not believe enough. I thought perhaps I might see a little into the state of affairs by going to the Russian frontier, where the refugees were gathered, and the committee of relief was sitting. At Odessa they said I should find at Brody a few hundred, or, perhaps, a thousand families. I, therefore, went out of my way, though sorely pressed,

and spent a day in going there, but not to much purpose. I found indeed a committee sitting, at the end of its labours, and a few men, women, and children being brought into the room to be portioned off; most of them fairly well dressed, many of them young men with young wives, and most suitable persons to emigrate; but if I am to be candid, I confess to the suspicion, that, whether persecution had anything to do with it or not, such young husbands might be very glad to get away from Russia to avoid military conscription. I presented the Lord Mayor's letter, and was asked to sit down; but the meeting being over in about an hour, I was left to go my way.

Thus much for the Western Jews, who looked upon the Russians as their oppressors; whereas, when I got to Samarkand, the Eastern Jews regarded the Russians as their deliverers, and the Israelites of Bokhara longed for the Tsar to gain possession of them as subjects. I took an early opportunity of securing a private interview in Bokhara with Jews to whom I had letters, but they appeared to be in great fear of being heard or seen talking to me. Formerly, they said, it was death to speak to a Russian, but that now they might do so on matters of business; but for all that, despised as they were, they did not dare presume to accept my invitation to visit us at the embassy.* Vambery speaks of the Jews coming to Bokhara from Kazim and Merv 150 years since, but those on the spot told me 600 or 700 years ago, and that most came from Persia, but some from Tunis, and among

* More than one prophecy respecting the Jews seems fulfilled in their condition in Bokhara, for they are truly "a proverb and a by-word" among the people (Deut. xxviii. 37; 1 Kings ix. 7). They still "dwell alone" (as once in the ghettos of Europe), "not reckoned among the nations" (Num. xxiii. 9), and these verses are still startlingly true: "Among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes and sorrow of mind: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee: and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life" (Deut. xxviii. 65, 66).

the latter, one named Maiman. This man, or a relative, was here in the time of Dr. Wolff's visit. I heard of him as far off as Petersburg, where he was known to the English Consul through having become a British subject, and a mercantile gentleman has told me that when Maiman came to London he astonished the English merchants by his skilful knowledge of cochineal. Maiman's son, or grandson, was said to speak French, if not English, and I was told at Moscow to inquire for him, but I found that he had been killed in the Russian service. Some of the Bokhara Jews had travelled to Europe, and one spoke a few words of French, but not enough to converse. I showed my letters, and asked the Jews if there was anything that I could do for them,—an offer they were disposed at first to embrace. They thought I might ask the Emir to release any Jewish prisoners he now has, and this request seemed to be made with reference to a former chief rabbi, who 15 years before had been arrested, his goods confiscated, himself forced to turn Muhammadan, and then left to serve in the palace, where he is kept a prisoner still, and not allowed to go out of the fortress. But upon further thoughts, they considered that to ask for his release might lead to his being put to death, and that my request was more likely to bring evil than good upon them for their mentioning the matter to me, so that they deprecated my attempting anything on their behalf.

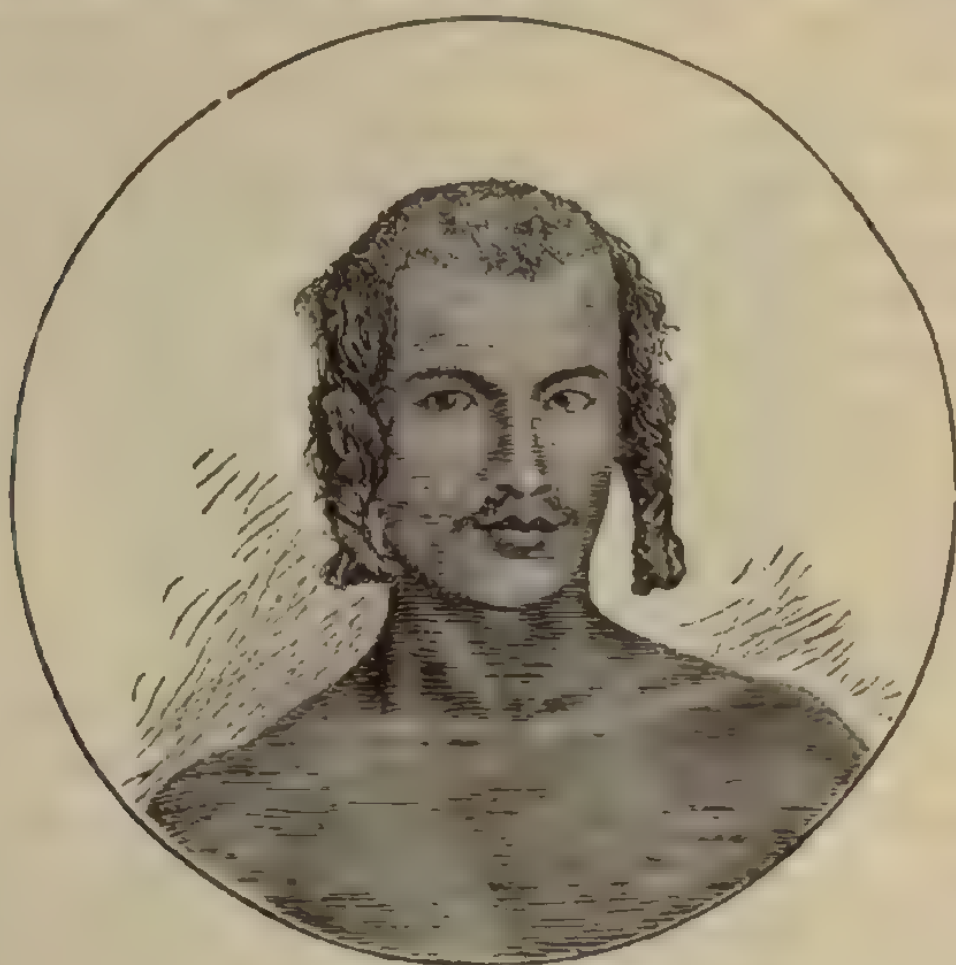
On the Friday, as I have said, I expressed a wish to see the synagogue, reputed to be 500 years old. We passed through a narrow entrance, and came into a room, perhaps 50 feet square, which had no pretence to architectural beauty. There was a reading desk of marble, and on this they began to show me their manuscripts and books. I had read in Dr. Wolff's memoir that the Jews of Bokhara had a manuscript of the prophet Daniel, wherein, in Chapter viii. 14, the words "Unto two thousand and three hundred days,"

read "2,400" days (which agrees with the Vatican copy of the Septuagint, whilst the Armenian translation reads 2,068), but I could not find this manuscript in the synagogue. They showed me, however, a large number of old *torahs*, or copies of the law, thrown together pell-mell on a platform or loft, midway between the floor and the ceiling, which I suppose in this case represented their *genizah*.* Nothing would satisfy me short of being allowed to mount the platform, and see and handle the manuscripts, so that I might convince myself that, as the rabbi asserted, they were not ancient. A ladder was brought, therefore, and up I went, accompanied by one of the Jews who spoke a few words of French, which when my custodians discovered, they were on tenterhooks, lest we should speak privately, and they requested that I would speak all I had to say through my interpreter. They also made it apparent to the Jew that they did not like his being on the platform with me. He remained, however, whilst I looked at one or two, which did, indeed, appear to be what I had been told—namely, disused *Torahs*—though in some cases apparently not much soiled. I found it was customary for persons to leave at their death a sufficiency of money to purchase a new manuscript for the synagogue, and I inferred that this must be a popular form of legacy in Bokhara, for I should estimate there may have been 20 or 30 on the loft, covered with dust, and otherwise not inviting to a further search.

There was, moreover, another obstacle to my investigation just then, inasmuch as the Jews had crowded in on the very tiptoe of expectation as to what the foreigners could mean by visiting their synagogue; and when I presented to the rabbi my Jewish letters,

* It is in such a place the Jews put their copies of the law that are soiled or ritually unfit for use, if only, for instance, a single word be rubbed out by wear. So literally do they interpret the passage, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it" (Deut. iv. 2).

written in "the holy language," they swarmed round, leaving us scarcely breathing-room. Some of the boys with their coal-black eyes were extremely handsome, but of all the crowds I have ever been in, I can remember none like those of the Asiatic Jews at Khokand, Samarkand, and Bokhara. They were not disrespectful or rude, and they made way when I wished to move, but the curiosity depicted on their countenances was most striking. We were, I suppose,



A JEW OF CENTRAL ASIA.

the first Englishmen they had seen, and that might have gone for something; but I fancy it raised their wonderment more that two guests of the Emir, living in the best embassy in the town, should bring them a letter in their own tongue, come down to their synagogue, and instead of despising them, as did the haughty Muhammadans, be willing to enter their houses and attend their sick—for we had promised so to do. Hence the people had come not in ones and twos, but in crowds, and as we left the synagogue not only did

they fill the passage, but some had clambered up to the tops of the walls and the roofs of the houses.

As for our Muslim custodians, all this excitement greatly perturbed them, and it seemed to "grieve them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel."* Moreover, when they discovered that the Jews were asking us to their houses, they made efforts to prevent us, by what sort of arguments I do not know, for I cut matters short by addressing our *dominus* in a few words of round Saxon, telling him to hold his tongue, and speaking in tones that conveyed to him my intention of going, whether he liked it or not. Then, turning to the man who wished our help, I motioned to him to lead the way whilst Sevier and I followed, leaving our guardians to do as they pleased. The crowds again pressed after us—with too much freedom I suppose Kolutch thought for these despised Jews,—for, being quick of temper, and they not heeding his words to keep back, my man assumed the policeman, and began to lay about him with his riding-whip to keep them at a respectful distance. The poor Jews submitted with a disappointed look, as if such treatment were only too common.

Meanwhile we had arrived, and the man whose daughter was sick, the multitude crowding, but there entered only Yakoob and a few more, and the father and mother of the girl. The women were not veiled, and, Englishman like, I offered my hand to the mother, who took it, though I have been since told that it is contrary to rabbinical teaching for a woman to shake hands with a man. Then, looking at the girl, we found her suffering from ophthalmia. Sevier prescribed, or promised medicine, and then we were entreated to go to another patient, at some little distance. We went to find an old rabbi with a paralyzed limb; and when Sevier stooped to examine it, the patriarch was affected to tears, and, placing his hands on Sevier's

* Neh. ii. 10.

head, he gave him his blessing. Sevier would have recommended galvanism for his legs and back, but as that was not to be had in Bokhara, he wrote a prescription to be made up at Samarkand. I do not know whether by this time the Emir's men thought they had gone too far, but they must have seen that I was annoyed, and they accordingly proceeded apologetically to explain that with the crowds pressing round they were apprehensive for my safety, and hence their desire that I should not venture into the houses. Fruit was now offered us in the rabbi's house, which we sat



A JEWESS OF BOKHARA.

down and ate, and talked, hearing nothing, however, of ancient books or writings.

I had thought it possible, before leaving England, that I might find a Hebrew manuscript or two worth bringing home, and not trusting to my slender acquaintance with Hebrew I went to the British Museum and consulted on the subject Dr. Ginsburg, who told me what kind of manuscripts would be worth buying, and the contrary, also by what signs I might judge approximately as to their antiquity or otherwise. I had also spoken upon the same subject, and received one or two

hints from Dr. Albert Harkavy, of the Imperial Library at Petersburg. Accordingly, I left Petersburg duly primed, and, strange to say, met my first manuscript at Moscow, recently arrived from Bokhara by the hands of a Jew, who was said to have acquired it at a cost of £500. This, they informed me, was about £300 more than a Hebrew manuscript, with points, of the whole Bible would cost. I began to apply my tests, and fancied that I had made my little learning go a long way, for pointing out to the learned rabbi who showed it me, that ה and ך were differently formed, likewise י and ם, and that consequently the manuscript could not be *very* ancient, the old bookworm said to his fellow-rabbi in German, which he thought I should not understand, "That's a knowing fellow!"

The manuscript struck me as of singular beauty, by reason of its marvellous illumination and the fineness of the Massoretic writing. When I reached Bokhara I told the Jews I had seen the manuscript, which to them was news. They knew the book. It had been sold by a woman—they thought for £100—but they did not know whether it had been taken to Constantinople or to Russia. When I arrived in England I chanced to meet Dr. Ginsburg, at the British Museum, and was informing him of the treasure I had met, when I was told that if I would come downstairs I could perhaps see it again. I did so, and there it was! The owner had brought it all the way from Bokhara to London, and now it enriches our national collection—a manuscript that has turned out to be of great importance to textual criticism as well as to the art of Jewish illumination.

The peculiarity of the illuminations consists in their exhibiting a mixture not only of French and Flemish art, but of German and Italian, interspersed with decorations of an Oriental character, more especially Persian* At the end, within richly illu-

* The manuscript consists of three volumes large quarto, the first

minated double borders, and in letters of gold, the writer of the codex describes himself and the distinguished patron for whom it was written as follows : " I, Samuel the Scribe, son of Rabbi Samuel Ibn Musa—peace be upon him !—have written these four-and-twenty books by the help of Him who is enthroned between the chérubim, at the order of the distinguished, etc., Rabbi Jòseph, son of the honoured Rabbi Jehudah, called Alchakim. . . . I finished the manuscript in the month Kislev, on the sixth day of the week, on the preparation for the Sabbath, in the year of the creation 5243 (*i.e.*, A.D. 1483), in Lisbon."

Hence, when I saw the manuscript at Moscow, I was right in my supposition that it was of late date, but Dr. Ginsburg says that even a cursory examination shows that it is a careful copy of an ancient and model codex, and that it in turn was designed for a model.

Thus I lighted upon what Dr. Ginsburg says, so far as he knows, is "the most richly illuminated Hebrew manuscript of the Old Testament in the world" ; and though I did not know its full value until I reached England, I was careful to ask in Bokhara whether

containing the Pentateuch, wherein not only is the first word of each of the five books written in letters of gold, in a beautifully illuminated border, occupying the space of six lines, but every one of the 53 pericopes, into which the Pentateuch is divided, is indicated by a rich illumination in the margin containing the word פֶּרֶשׁ (pericope) in letters of gold. The second volume contains "the Prophets" in the following order : Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The first page of each of these prophets has a highly illuminated border, and the first word of each book is not only written in letters of gold, but is in a square on a beautiful groundwork of delicate penmanship. Two leaves separate the earlier from the later prophets, and on these are written in the border, in letters of gold, the celebrated Massorah registering the number of verses in the Hebrew Bible ; and in ordinary ink the alphabetical list of *hapax legomena*, or words occurring only once with and once without the letter ׀ at the beginning. In volume iii., of 186 folios, the books are in the following unusual order : Chronicles, Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Daniel, Ruth, Canticles, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Ezra, and Nehemiah. After the sacred text are 9 folios, 7 of which are filled with Massoretic and rabbinical lore.

there were any more like it. They replied "No." I confess, however, to leaving the city with a regret that I did not make another effort, and search to the bottom the Torahs on the synagogue loft. As a matter of fact we saw none of the principal Jews after our visit on Friday. The Emir's men evidently did not wish us to go into the houses of the people, and the Jews were afraid as to what might be done if they received us. Two Jews came to the embassy on the following day, one with bad eyes, and the other inviting us to his house, but also telling Yakoob characteristically that he had European "clothes to sell." We had neither time nor opportunity to avail ourselves of this offer, but on the Sunday a knot of half-a-dozen Jews and two Jewesses came to the embassy for treatment. Of the latter, one had slight goitre, the other ophthalmia; and, of the men, one had a weak hand, and another dry and chapped fingers.

After this we met no more Jews in Central Asia. I am anticipating a little, but by way of finishing with this subject, I may add it occurred to me after leaving Bokhara, when writing my last letter of thanks to the Emir, that it might possibly do good, to express guardedly to my royal Mussulman host my good wishes for Israel, and I did so in the following words:—

"PETRO-ALEXANDROVSK,

"October 17-29th, 1882.

"To His Majesty the Emir of Bokhara.

"SIR,

"According to my promise, I hasten to inform your Majesty of my safe arrival here, and once more to express my thanks for all the kindness I have received in passing through Bokhara. I will not weary your Majesty by mentioning the many things that have pleased and interested me, but if I may be allowed to mention one thing that has pained me in my travels in Central Asia, it is the condition of the Jews.

"I was told in Samarkand that the Jews in Bokhara

are placed under restrictions, and on visiting them was sorry to find them so cramped for room, and possessing only one synagogue. May I not venture to hope that your Majesty will be pleased to allow them to build other synagogues if they wish?

“Your Majesty will doubtless remember that the Jews are God’s ancient people, to whom He gave His first written revelation, and Jesus Christ, our great Christian Prophet, was also a Jew. It would therefore be a thing, I am sure, pleasing to the God your Majesty worships, that His people in your midst should have similar privileges to your other subjects.

“We, in England, and other nations in Europe, used once to place many and severe restrictions upon the Jews, but we are now ashamed of this, and in England we give them full rights with ourselves. I sincerely hope your Majesty will be pleased, on consideration, to do the same, for I ask this out of love for the people, amongst whom I have friends in England.

“Let me once more thank your Majesty for the splendid hospitality I have received in Bokhara—such as I have received in no other country in the world—and allow me to remain,

“Your Majesty’s obedient Servant,

“HENRY LANSDELL.”

What fruit this letter bore I have not heard, but thus finished my intercourse with a scattered remnant of that wonderful race, amongst whom I had seen much of interest, by whom I had been kindly received, and on whose behalf I would willingly have done more.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BOKHARA THE NOBLE.

Bokhara as a place of learning.—Visit to a primary school.—A ride outside the walls.—Mosque of Namazi-gah.—Visit to the Kush-beggi.—The Emir's palace and curiosities.—Conversation with the Kush-beggi and his son.—Some of my requests refused.—Value of presents received.—Visit to the bazaar.—Commerce and trade of Bokhara.—The Righistan.—Bokhara after dark.—Standing up for my rights.—Ride towards Katte-Kurgan.—The lepers' quarter.—Fear of punishment.—Return to our lodgings.

I NOTICED, in my Uzbek interpreter, that, when he was speaking to the Emir or other native notables, he was careful to add to the word Bokhara, "Al-sherif," or "the noble"; "Bokhara the noble," spoken in a religious sense, being the official name among the Muhammadans for this seat of so-called learning and piety. Accordingly we were all agog to see the University of Colleges and Schools, whither Muslim students are said to come from distant countries, even Siberia, as to a mediæval Oxford; and as we were taking a morning ride during the Saturday of our stay at Bokhara, I inquired the meaning of a sing-song noise that proceeded from a house we were passing, and learned that it was a school. We dismounted immediately, and, entering, found therein from 25 to 30 scholars, of ages from 6 to 13. It was a good example of one of the *maktab* or lower schools, just as in the *medresses* we had seen specimens of the upper schools, of Central

Asia. Both are usually attached to the mosques, and maintained on the *wakuf* or foundation; but if the schools are not so maintained, they are kept up partly at the expense of the people generally, and of the parents of the scholars. The teachers of the lower schools are usually chosen from among the inhabitants of the district in which the school is situated, and who are taxed at the rate of from 6*d.* to 1*s.* per house for the teachers' support. The building we entered was small and simple enough—a single room roofed with a dome, having several doors instead of windows, and niches around for shoes, clothes, etc. On the floor, and parallel to the walls, were raised benches, about 14 inches apart, consisting of beams of wood 10 inches high. The pupils sometimes sit on these, or, as we saw them, on the ground, their books resting on the beams. Tables or desks there are none. The pupils sit with their faces towards the centre of the room, in the direction of the teacher, who is in the middle of them, and thus, like Saul of Tarsus, they are “brought up at his feet.”* The floor is usually covered with plaited reed mats or simple straw. I asked how much the scholars paid, and found that their fees were partly tendered in kind, and by way of presents; but M. Kühn, who has written upon the subject somewhat fully, mentions as an ordinary school fee on beginning from 3*d.* to 1*s.* per month, with a present of cakes and raisins.

In these lower schools the most unsophisticated simplicity reigns. There is no division into classes, but by the side of one scholar sing-songing the alphabet is another learning the verses of Khoja Hafiz, or not less loudly reading the Koran. In the school we entered they all read together, swinging their bodies backwards and forwards, though one boy was permitted to read alone for us to hear. I asked about school hours and holidays, and found that the boys are present

* Acts xxii. 3.

from six in the morning till five at night, with an interval of two hours at noon. They go on, moreover, all the year round, except Fridays and a week at each of the three Muhammadan festivals. On Thursday each pupil usually brings his teacher a specially prepared cake, and on that day also the studies close at noon, the teacher, before dismissing his pupils, examining their nails, and banging their heads with a book if they are not found clean. But Thursday is also the day for paying off disciplinary scores. Thus, if a boy has played truant, some of his fellows are sent in search, and, on bringing him back, the culprit is laid on the floor, his feet lifted in a noose, and he is bastinadoed, the right of giving the first blow belonging to his captors, as a reward for finding him. On Thursday, too, the teacher usually shows them the attitudes of devotion, and concludes by reciting a prayer. Education among the Mussulman women is at a very low ebb. There are, nevertheless, in most towns one or two *bibi-kalfas*, whose duty it is to teach girls, for the most part those of the rich. In the school we entered at Bokhara I had a little conversation with the teacher, and thought to surprise him by saying that in some of our English schools we have as many as a thousand children ; to which he replied with the greatest calmness, as if to give me a Roland for my Oliver, that they had many schools, but only about 25 scholars in each. His was only one of many instances wherein the self-complacency and ignorance of the Asiatics struck me forcibly, for they seemed not to have the least idea that they were behind other people, or needed any improvement.

Remounting our horses we went outside the town, by the Salch-Kaneh gate as before, but turning now to the right, my intention being to ride round the remainder of the walls ; but we stopped awhile opposite the Namazgah gate, at the mosque Namazi-gah, said to be 350 years old, and where prayers are read

at the two feasts, Ramazan and Kürban. As this building was tolerably high, though some distance from the walls, I wished to ascend, and did so, our aged "dominus" clambering up to the top after me. We could see several of the prominent buildings standing above the walls, such as the chief minaret, and the blue dome of the Jumma mosque close by, as well as the citadel, and the domes surmounting many medresses; but we were too far off to get anything like a view of the whole of the town. We could see a good long stretch of the wall, looking truly ancient, and perhaps rather imposing, with no houses or buildings outside, with battlements and buttresses, which from a distance appear like towers, though not higher than the wall itself. The buttresses are called *burj*, and are 131 in number. The wall is 7 miles 980 yards round, 24 feet high, and 10 feet thick at the base.*

There were no houses near the mosque, on whose summit we were standing, so I took occasion to twit Mirza Yusuf about his fear that we should overlook the apartments of the women. Then, remounting our horses, I galloped off to finish the remaining gates, namely, Sheikh-Jelal, Kara-Kul, Shir-ghiran, and so entered, as before, the gate Talipaj. This we did in about half an hour, including the stoppage at Namazgah, but the run was not so long as we had had on the

* The condition of the walls in Central Asia more than once brought up Scripture parallels. At Aulie-Ata they presented a scene such as Nehemiah (ii. 13) saw when he "went out by night, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down." The rent and cracked walls of Etchmiadzin, in Armenia, reminded me of the derisive expression of Tobiah, "That which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall" (Neh. iv. 3); but I do not remember being struck with a similar multiplicity of cracks in Central Asia, where I think the walls were thicker. Once more, in the so-called Jasper wainscoting of Tamarlane's tomb, we saw an exemplification of Oriental magnificence pictured in the expression, "the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of costly stones" (Rev. xxi. 19), or better, perhaps, "I will lay thy foundations with sapphires, and I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones" (Isa. liv. 11-12).

preceding occasion. It was an autumnal morning, decidedly cool, not to say cold ; so by the time we reached the embassy I told our old gentleman that, as the morning was fresh, I thought he might like a warming, whereupon Fazul, seeing the joke, looked at me, and expressively hid his face in his khalat to laugh. Our custodian took it good-naturedly, however, saying that an occasional gallop was good, since it stirred the blood.

The Kush-beggi had appointed noon as the hour for receiving us, but it was not till some time later he sent, with apologies for delay, to say that he was ready. We therefore paraded through the streets with our retinue and certain of the local dignitaries, and came to the Righistan, or public place. On one side of this is the citadel, or palace of the Emir, built on a square mound, 35 or 40 feet high, and about a mile in circuit, with an area of 24 acres. On this area, surrounded by a high crenelated wall, are built the palace, the houses of the Kush-beggi, and certain of the court grandees and their retinue. At the entrance are two lofty towers, and, looking up, I noticed the clock made by Giovanni Orlandi, who fell into the hands of Nasr-Ullah, and when condemned to death because he would not turn Mussulman, was pardoned on promising to make the despot a machine for measuring time. There were also a few cannons lying about, and, as we drew near, we were saluted by the soldiery and sentinels presenting arms. Things had altered, I thought, since the last of my countrymen rode his horse in the Righistan, and since the first was allowed to be there only on foot. For my own part I did not give the matter a thought, and dismounted only at the foot of the inclined way that leads to the palace.

The Kush-beggi (or *lord* of the Beks) is the chief adviser and confidential officer of the sovereign, the first person in Bokhara after the Emir. He manages all the commerce of the city, and its dealings with neighbouring

countries. He sits at certain times on a raised platform under the archway at the entrance of the citadel to transact business with those who enter.* Besides this he is his Majesty's viceroy. The Kush-beggi is the chief representative of authority when the Emir is absent. During this time, in keeping with the Bokhariot idea that the greatest man in a city must always remain at home, the Kush-beggi is said never to leave the town. He was not sitting in the gate at the time we entered, but above, as he usually does, I believe, when the Emir is away, and then another officer takes the place of judgment below.

We noticed this portal arrangement in many towns, but at the fortress my attention was attracted therefrom by some curiosities hanging on the walls. Among them was a huge whip, 7 feet long, with a handle of about 4 feet, the thin end of the lash being three inches, the thick end 5 inches, and the middle about 8 inches in circumference. I wondered what it could be for, and was told that it belonged to a former monarch, who, perhaps, used it as a fighting weapon. When some of the courtiers were telling me next day how

* Just as "Daniel sat in the gate of the king" (ii. 49), so it was "beside the way of the gate" that Absalom said to those who came for judgment, "There is no man deputed of the king to hear thee" (2 Sam. xv. 2, 3). Again, with David in a critical time, "The king stood by the gate side," and confidence was restored when "the king arose and sat in the gate" (2 Sam. xviii. 4, and xix. 8). Moreover, since trials are conducted there, "to turn aside the poor in the gate" meant "to give unjust judgment" (Amos v. 12). "The gate" also served in the East as a place for public buying and selling. Abraham thus purchased Macpelah (Gen. xxiii. 10). Similarly Boaz went to the gate for witnesses to his paying the *kalim*, on taking Ruth to wife. And in Samaria, after a siege, corn was sold there (2 Kings vii. 1). The gate was a place of debate for the public good. "Hamor and Shechem communed there with the men of their city," etc. (Gen. xxxiv. 20). A "fool openeth not his mouth in the gate" (Prov. xxiv. 7); but the gate was a place for prominent persons, and for Mordecai to refuse there to reverence Haman was particularly insulting to the court favourite (Esther iii. 2, v. 9). Job lamented the bright days when "he went out to the gate through the city" (Job xxix. 7). Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom, when two angels came at even (Gen. xix. 1). Lastly, for Abraham's seed to overcome the nobles and councils of a nation was to possess the gate of his enemies (Gen. xxii. 17).

prisoners were flogged, I asked if this great whip were used for the purpose, whereon they said indignantly that it was made by a lunatic, and presented to Abdullah Khan. This is a less poetic origin than that given by Maieff, who calls it the whip of the hero Rustum, and adds that formerly there were seven of such whips, but the "most religious" Emir Nasr-Ullah distributed six as relics of the past among the dervishes and other holy men of Bokhara. The courtiers added that a snake-like staff, hanging near the whip, belonged to a saint, and, when dipped in water, possessed curative properties. Another thing I noticed in the passage at the entrance to the palace was a narrow shelf on either side, which served as a sleeping place for the guard and attendants.* At length, after passing through some passages, we came to the house of the Vizier.

The Kushi-beggi, a man of 60 or 65, and his son came out to greet us, and we were conducted into the grand man's chamber, that, for a wonder, had two glass windows, and contained a French clock. I knew, as I have said, that I was under surveillance, and that my deeds, if not my words, were reported to the Emir; for while some of the attendants were on one occasion waiting for me outside a house, two of them were reading over their notes, not noticing there was a man near who understood them, and who heard them read the record of my ill-deeds in galloping away from them round the walls, notwithstanding that I was told to go slowly. Remembering, therefore, that my note-taking had brought me under suspicion, I began by telling the Kush-beggi of my travels; that I was an author, and, therefore, I took notes of what

* Illustrating so naturally 2 Sam. xi. 8, 9. "Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there went out after him a mess of meat from the king. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house." At Ura-Tiube I observed that a Russian soldier, who was sleeping in the open air, had placed his bedstead close to the front door of the commandant.

I saw. "He might perhaps have heard of this," I said. Also, I wrote books. I had written about Siberia, and the Emperor of Russia had accepted a copy, as also Count Tolstoy, and had been much pleased. Then I showed him an official letter to this effect from the Russian Embassy in London, together with my letters from General Chernaieff and the Lord Mayor. I added, moreover, that I should perhaps write a book concerning Bokhara; and that I might see their customs, I requested to be allowed to be present at a circumcision, a marriage, and a funeral.

To this he replied that inquiry should be made if there were such things going on, and he would let us know.

I then asked to be allowed to see the Emir's library, but the old fox replied that his Majesty had taken the key. But I said that the Emir had given me permission, and it was strange there should be any difficulty about the key. He then proposed to send a messenger for it to the Emir, but I disappointedly replied that was of no use, to which he said "Very well!" I inquired about the antiquities promised by his master, but he said the Emir had not written to ask them to find any, although, if I desired it, he would send to the bazaar and have them brought to me. I thought it was of no use to accept this offer, and asked that a mullah should be sent to me who could decipher inscriptions on coins. The Kush-beggi said the man should be sent, but he did not come. I next requested to see the two prisons, called the Kana-Khaneh and the Zindan. I could not, he said, without the Emir's permission, nor could I be allowed to ascend the great minaret.

Upon this I changed my tactics, and said I must tell General Chernaieff that when his visitors came to Bokhara they were not allowed to see the things they wished, to which the old man said that they could not do things contrary to their law. "But

surely," I said, "it is not against your law for me to see a prison!" He replied that in this case the Emir must be asked; whereupon, finding myself no more successful than before, I told him that if he came to London he would be allowed to see the prisons, and ascend our highest building as often as he pleased. For this he thanked me, and appeared relieved by the remark.

I then invited him to ask me any questions he pleased. He at first declined, until I drew him out by telling him that our Queen was the greatest monarch in the world. "Is she rich?" he asked. I replied that for her private purse she has 6,000,000 *tengas* a year, and that some of our nobles also have as much. On the previous day I had told the Kush-beggi's messengers that so great was our Empire that the sun never set thereon; upon which they pleaded that "surely it must set for a *few* hours?" Then, discovering that they did not understand the earth's rotundity, although one of them had travelled to Petersburg, I took a melon, and roughly explained it; but I fancied they thought I was "cramming" them. It occurred to me now to repeat my astronomical and geographical lectures to the Kush-beggi, and I again spoke of our Queen as ruling over an Empire on which the sun never sets. Was his Excellency aware, I asked, that the sun did not move round the earth, but the earth round the sun? That, he replied, was their opinion; and I then went on to explain my paradox by stating that the sun was always shining upon some part of our dominions. Further, since they had told me, as a sign I took it of their greatness and importance, that they had eight guest-houses, and received many guests in the course of the year at Bokhara, I told him that we had 10,000 visitors a year come to London. Did he think, I asked, that his son would come? and, in case of such an event happening, I gave him my card, hoping to see him.

During the conversation the festal board had been spread for us with fruit and viands. I had observed that up to the present we had nowhere seen in the khanate any diaper or damask linen, but our napkins had been made by cutting from corner to corner a square of common brown calico, thus making a triangular serviette of original design, the table-cloth being usually of white calico. When, therefore, at the Kush-beggi's, I saw on the table a damask napkin, I said to Sevier, "Ah! here is linen at last!" when, upon examining it, I found it was my own napkin, which, with our knives and forks, they had brought up from the embassy, the Kush-beggi, I presume, having no such furniture to his table. I do not remember that the Kush-beggi or his son partook of the food with us, but they sat at the table. I inquired whether arrangements had been made to get us to Charjui in two days, and was answered in the affirmative. I then rose to go, but was pressed to stay longer, whereupon we renewed our conversation, and by way of starting a topic I asked if he remembered two Englishmen named Stoddart and Conolly being put to death at Bokhara, about 40 years ago? He replied that he was then Bek of Samarkand, and he did not remember Dr. Wolff coming to inquire into the matter. He appeared not to like the subject, whereupon I proceeded to administer another potion, that I thought would not be sweet, by asking if he remembered the visit of Dr. Schuyler. He said "Yes," and I reminded him that Schuyler purchased a slave, whereupon both father and son nodded their heads as certainly remembering *that*, and I added that I was very glad that they had no slavery now. M. Stremoukhoff's assertion that slaves are still bought in the khanate has led me to wish that I had made some inquiries upon the subject, but I heard of nothing of the kind anywhere in the khanate. I had asked, on the day after our arrival, to see the interior of the palace, which was then refused; and now, on

leaving the room, I expressed a wish to see more of the building; but again the old fellow said that his Majesty's apartments were locked up, and the remaining portion of the palace was occupied by the women. At parting he shook my hand warmly twice, and thanked me for my visit, but I had summed him up as an old fox, who had utterly disgusted me by his want of straight-forwardness. The Kush-beggi, however, at Bokhara has great influence with an Emir, especially in the case of the present one, who is said to be very easily led by the opinions of others. I had sent presents for both the Kush-beggi and his son, among other things of a Persian Bible, Arabic New Testament, a watch and chain, india-rubber cushions, a compass, articles for toilet use, etc., in return for which he sent me a piece of silk and four black curly Kara-Kul lamb-skins.

My presents received had by this time so increased that I was obliged to think what to do with them. I had crossed the frontier with two horses, and now was the possessor of six! I was given to understand that I need not be at all nice about selling my presents even under the noses of those who gave them; nay, that in all probability the Emir himself would buy the horses again, to present to his next guest. Yakoob and Kolutch valued my four royal steeds to be worth, in all, £10, but when a horse-dealer was sent for, he offered only £8 for the lot! This was rather amusing to one accustomed to English prices, and since I did not know what cattle I might need in crossing the desert, I determined to take two of my presents down the Oxus, and the remaining two I sold for the sum of 68s.

After returning from the Kush-beggi we went to the bazaar, where also we had been several times previously. Were I to speak of the commerce of Bokhara without book, and as it appeared to my limited observation, I should almost be tempted to say that more

merchandise crosses London Bridge in an hour than enters Bokhara in a twelvemonth! M. Petrovsky speaks of the bazaar of Bokhara as five times as large as that of Tashkend, and he estimates the transactions of the Bokhara market at £4,000,000.

Business is carried on in 24 caravansaries and 6 *timis*, besides the ordinary shops. As in other Asiatic towns, various kinds of merchandise are sold apart. So, again, the various trades are localized in streets, as, *e.g.*, for selling machines for silk-winding, copper-smiths, bakers,* etc. In the shoemakers' street were skins for sale at half-a-crown each. In the armourers' street I secured a capital helmet of mail, a powder-flask, and a battle-axe; and, in another street, some rude china inkstands and cups of local manufacture, which have, fortunately, come safely to England, where I presume they are unique in origin, if not transcendent in beauty. Another curiosity I obtained is a woman's veil (called *chasman*), made in part of horse-hair, and closely resembling the hair-cloth used in England for upholstery, as also a woman's cotton khalat (called *pharange*), similar in form to that of a man. In wearing it, however, the garment, instead of hanging from the shoulders, does so from the head, the collar being made to encircle the veiled face; and instead of the woman putting her arms into the sleeves, these are pinned together, and allowed to fall down the back. As winter was approaching, we were advised to provide ourselves with fur *shubas*, or robes, for crossing the desert. We found a *serai* set apart for this trade. In form the *serai* was a quadrangular building, very much like a medresse, with the interior resembling a college quadrangle of two stories. The centre was given up to horses and camels, and bales of merchandise, the rooms in the lower story were for warehouses, and in the upper story were rooms approached along

* So in Jerusalem, Jeremiah was to be given daily a piece of bread out of the bakers' street (Jer. xxxvii. 21).

a wide gallery, and in each of them fur shubas were hanging for sale. The shubas were lined with various furs, specially that of the jackal, and common ones differed in price from 30s. to 63s., there being few of the best kinds. It was probably a little too early in the season to see a large collection. We had a few coins brought to us, but all the fine promises of the Emir and Kush-beggi about searching for antiquities came to little or nothing. I tried to get some native books, and succeeded to a small extent, but only, as it were, by stealth, for I saw nothing like a bookseller's shop, and had to purchase through a middle man.

The streets and lanes of Bokhara (which are not named separately, but only as belonging to a certain quarter of the town) are exceedingly tortuous and narrow, varying in width, as Khanikoff says, from 40 inches to 20 feet. It did not need many people, therefore, to give the bazaars a very busy appearance, and everywhere crowds attended us, staring at the strangers, especially when we stopped to make purchases, so that our horses could make way only very slowly. One of the liveliest places was the Righistan, which we first saw on the day following our arrival. On two sides are five mosques and medresses, and on a third side is a pool, around which loungers congregate. Here we dismounted, the better to go in and out among the stalls for the sale of small wares, and afterwards visited several mosques and medresses. Near the Medresse Divan-beggi is a square pool, called Liabehaus Divan-beggi, the sides being of square stones, with 8 steps to the water, and shaded around with mulberry-trees of a century's growth. Here are numbers of tea and refreshment stalls, from which one may see the people drinking, bathing, or performing their ceremonial ablutions in the pool.

After finishing our business on Saturday afternoon, we called again at the Russian scrai. This kept us till dusk, so that we wended our way homewards after

sunset, and saw the miserable, deserted appearance of the streets by night. There were no street lamps, and the few men about were by no means desirable company, for I heard that lately not a night had passed without a murder or a robbery, and that the Emir had issued permission to the people, when they saw a thief on their premises, to shoot him, also that several robbers had been publicly executed. The streets of Bokhara, therefore, were no places for moonlight wanderings, and having reached the embassy we spent a quiet evening, as we had arranged to visit, on the morrow, the shrine of the patron saint of Bokhara, and, if possible, the lepers' quarter.

Next morning the Kush-beggi sent to felicitate me as usual, and, to my great disgust, added that, as we were to travel on the morrow, we might rest, and not go out that day, which Yakoob interpreted as a small piece of revenge for our galloping round the walls. I was somewhat nettled, feeling that we had not come to be prisoners, but guests, and ordered our horses to be saddled immediately. I then told the messengers that we had made our arrangements, and intended to go to Baha-uddin, to which we hoped the Kush-beggi would not object. Upon this our custodians became perturbed, especially Mirza Yusuf, who, as he saw me about to mount my horse, got in a great fever, and said that they had received many Russian embassies, but that none of the others acted thus, but obeyed what they were told. I replied, "Ah! yes, but you have never had an *English* embassy before!" and then, declining to wait, I bade him tell his master where we were gone, and if the Kush-beggi had any message to send, to bring it after us. The old gentleman mounted his horse somewhat in dudgeon, and went off hastily, whilst I and my party, and one or more of the Emir's men, sallied forth to the suburbs out of the Samarkand gate on the high road to Katte-Kurgan.

As we rode towards Baha-uddin we passed through

gardens, along a broad avenue intersected with ditches, and planted with trees. This road is much frequented by pilgrims on their way to the tomb of the renowned Baha-uddin Nakishbend, who died in 1303, and was the founder of an order of dervishes bearing his name, to whom are attributed the origination of those religious extravagancies that distinguish Eastern from Western Islamism. He is looked upon as a second Muhammad, and a pilgrimage to his tomb consequently as nearly equal in merit to a journey to Mecca. Near the shrine of the saint is the tomb of the great Abdullah Khan, a photograph of which I fortunately secured. There is also a sort of college for beggars.

I cannot say, however, that I expected the shrine and its surroundings to repay me for the trouble of the journey. What I really wanted was to visit the poor lepers. I had been taught at Karshi the folly of directly asking to see them, and I suspected that I should get only a refusal if I repeated the request in Bokhara; but I had heard that we must pass the lepers' quarter in going to Baha-uddin, and hence my zeal to tread the pilgrim's path. I was disappointed, however; for when we reached the *Makhan Khaneh*, where there were said to be about 150 houses, we saw no single building that invited entrance, nor any people about, though we were given to understand that the lepers were allowed to come into the town and beg.

Meanwhile, the Kush-beggi's messengers had not overtaken us, and now that I had attained, so far as I could, the object of my running away, I began to think what might be the consequences of this breach of discipline. I remembered how Dr. Wolff was harassed in Bokhara, and how this same Kush-beggi, with whom I had to do, had thwarted Dr. Schuyler's desire to go to Charjui, even though he had the Emir's permission. I confess to having felt it a little difficult to know how best to act. If I allowed myself to be dictated to, and treated as a prisoner, I thought it



TOMB OF ABDULLAH KHAN AT BAHAU-UD-DIN.

would imply fear, and I had before me the policy of my American predecessor, who would not allow himself to be imposed upon, and found that the more respect he demanded, the more he received. The situation, moreover, gave me a certain sympathy with Colonel Stoddart, who was said to have been unyielding and blunt ; but when a single man is surrounded by all the powers of an Oriental city as he was, and has to hold his own against them, it is not easy always to see what is best to be done. In my own much smaller and less important case, I was fully aware how completely I was in the hands of this unscrupulous Kushbeggi, not indeed to harm me perhaps, but to delay me, and vex me more than enough by withholding help for the way. He had prevented my seeing several things upon which I was intent, and had told me numerous falsehoods, so that I had not the smallest respect for him, nor had I reason to believe he would do for me one whit more than he was obliged, or than suited his purpose. Since, however, I had bearded his Excellency, and sent a message to his den, I deemed it might be better to make a virtue of necessity, and turn back to meet the messengers. We did so, and thus came to the embassy without seeing them ; and when, later in the day, our old custodian appeared, he said he had trotted round all the city gates, and elsewhere in pursuit,—a distance, he declared, of 10 miles,—when, failing to hear of us, he had given it up as a bad job, and so returned to the embassy. The old fellow was warm, but happily very good-tempered over it ; and when I inquired by a side wind what the Kushbeggi said to our conduct, it transpired that he was not annoyed, the reason of his order being that they had not taken the proper steps to provide us, on our arrival at the shrine, with refreshments, not to do which to their guests would be a breach of etiquette the Emir might not like if he heard of it. This dispelled my fears, and we spent the rest of the day at the embassy.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SUNDRIES CONCERNING BOKHARA.

Both guest and prisoner.—Use made of custodians.—Bokhara minerals, garden produce, and animals.—The natives and their diseases.—Treatment of the insane.—The *rishta*, or guinea-worm.—Native method of treatment.—The Bokhara prisons.—Inquiry as to where Stoddart and Conolly were confined.—Manner of life of the Emir.—His harem.—Our generous reception at Bokhara and its cause.—Extra presents to the Emir.

FROM the hour that I crossed the Bokhara frontier and met the Emir's messengers, I was constantly accompanied by officials—not that they did not leave us alone in our rooms, but when going about we were always attended.* In travelling, there was generally one, often more, of position who went with us a long distance, if not all the way, whilst others were relieved at successive stations. Besides our fixed attendants in Bokhara, some of the higher functionaries came each morning to exchange greetings from the *Kush-beggi*, and I took advantage of these visits to draw them out by asking questions pre-arranged; and thus, by putting the courtiers and other natives through the same examination, I was able to compare their various answers with information received from men of European education, both Muslim and Christian.

* The custom of Eastern dignitaries being usually thus attended may perhaps account for Ahimelech's fear on meeting David and saying, "Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?" (1 Sam. xxi. 1.)

I asked about their minerals, but I imagine that Lehmann's book, which includes the Zarafshan valley, gives far more information than the natives themselves know. One man told me he had read in the *Turkistan Gazette* that gold in small quantities was obtainable on the banks of the Amu-daria, but that the results were so inconsiderable that the search for it was confined to Turkomans and Uzbegs. I obtained in the shops at Bokhara some good specimens of pink salt, one of which I have given to the British Museum. The Bokhariots have coal, but they do not work it.

Concerning the products of their gardens, one man at Shahr-i-sabz told me comprehensively that they had "all kinds of fruits except lemons, oranges, and dates." They grow good peas, but do not eat them green. They use willow bark for tanning, and their chief cures are effected with medicinal plants.

As for the animal kingdom, my informants told me they had in the mountainous portion of the khanate tigers, bears, wolves, deer, and wild boars. To these I may add a very remarkable and peculiarly small breed of goats, covered with a very long and coarse hair, reaching almost to the ground. M. Oshanin saw them in Karategin, and also herds of Yaks. They are in use all across Mongolia, and I have a photograph, lent me by Mr. Delmar Morgan, of a so-called "Tibetan cow" (which I suppose is a cross-breed), introduced by the Russians into Turkistan. The yaks pasture in the coldest parts of Tibet and the eastern portion of Bokhara upon short herbage, peculiar to mountain tops and bleak plains. It remains, therefore, to be seen whether the animal will thrive in the lowlands. During our stay in Bokhara we drank excellent milk, and Yakoob, finding out my weakness for cream, not only kept us constantly supplied with it for our tea, but made the remainder into butter.

In our wanderings in the khanate thus far, we had

met with Tajiks, Persians, Jews, Hindus, Arabs, and Uzbeks. The last were comparatively new to us, for in Turkistan they comprise only 6 per cent. of the entire population. In Bokhara they form the ruling race. The Khan of Khiva and the Emir of Bokhara are both descended from the *Min* section of the Uzbeks. The Uzbeks have, however, lost their political and tribal importance. Most of them have mixed with the Tajik, Kirghese, and other races, and have settled down and become known as Sarts. Hence, in the



A TIBETAN COW AND NATIVE KEEPER.

bazaar, the crowd did not appear of quite so motley a character as in some other towns we had visited, and in speaking of the natives we usually heard the one general word *Sart* used as comprehending the whole.

We gave out that any who were sick might come to be treated. The diseases from which the Bokhariots most frequently suffer are fevers, ophthalmia, leprosy, small-pox and the rishta. They practise vaccination, but it is not compulsory, and they have a "pest-house," or rather a village, where those who wish may be inoculated. A boy came one morning, his head being covered

with a thick *eczema*, to whom Sevier simply said, "Go and wash! and then come again." I was not a little struck with the account they gave of their treatment of the insane. They have a special mullah, called *Ishan*, who is brought to a man when he begins to fail, and who reads over the patient prayers from the Koran for a week or two. If this proves unavailing, the patient is taken to the *Ishan's* house, tied to a post, and kept on low diet for a couple of months. Thus in the *Ishan's* yard, not far from the Russian Company's office, in the quartal of Bokhara called Juibar, may be seen a number of these patients chained, or rather picketed, to posts like horses. As a further step they are beaten whilst prayers are going on. If a poor creature does not show signs of pain, his case is thought incurable; but if he is seen to suffer, his recovery is hoped for.* A Russian told me that one of his servants was slightly deranged, but, having gone to the *Ishan*, appeared to be getting better. "But suppose he does not improve," I asked, "what do you do with him?"

"He remains there chained, and if regarded as quite incurable, his parents are obliged to take him away and keep him locked up."

"But suppose he has no parents?"

"Then he is turned out, and allowed to run about the town till someone takes compassion on him."

After hearing this it was a comfort to be told by one educated Muhammadan that they had not much insanity, and that he had never even seen anyone raving mad.

The reading of the sufferings of Dr. Wolff, and what I had seen and been warned of in Samarkand, made me specially fearful of the *rishta*, a well-known disease in Bokhara, Karshi, Jizakh, and Katte-Kurgan.

* Is it possible that Prov. xxiii. 35 can have reference to any such custom, wherein the man, apparently in delirium tremens or after a deep debauch, says, "They have stricken me, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not; when shall I awake?"

It is also met with in India, Arabia, and Africa, whence with the negroes it was taken to America. This disease is caused by a worm, which develops under the skin in May and August, in the form of a cylindrical body, lengthening at the rate of about an inch in a week, and lying extended, or curled in a lump two inches in diameter. Later on, an abscess appears where the head (as is said) of the parasite lies, and



A PUBLIC POOL AT BOKHARA.

through the opening thus made, especially when the surrounding skin is pressed, the end of the worm appears. Sometimes, however, the skin, lifted by means of a needle, is cut off in layers until the head of the worm is reached and grasped.

The problem now is to extract the animal entire, in which case the wound soon heals. Native specialists, usually barbers, insert a needle under the worm, and one end is drawn out by the fingers of the

right hand, whilst those of the left press the affected part, the operation lasting from one to five minutes. Russian medical men wind off the animal on a reel, so much daily as comes out without force, till the whole, commonly three, but sometimes (according to one physician) seven feet in length, is extracted. If, however, the worm should break, and part of it remain in the body, illness continues for several months. It was an unsuccessful case of this kind we saw in the military hospital at Samarkand, where the portion of the *rishta* extracted was given to me. The other parts had come out of the patient of themselves, in numerous places, through painful abscesses.

In appearance the worm is a long, cylindrical body, of a milk-white colour, resembling cooked vermicelli, and can be stretched like a piece of elastic. When torn, a milk-white fluid exudes, containing an immense number of minute worms, swimming rapidly, whence it appears this animal is viviparous. Concerning its origin in man, Dr. Klopatoft, who resided three years at Jizakh, considered that water was the medium by which the parasite was conveyed, entering most likely through the pores of the skin. Fedchenko, on the other hand, came to the conclusion that the germs of the worm are swallowed in drinking the water.

Some persons are, however, I imagine, more prone to the disease than others ; for a Russian told me that his friend, who came to Bokhara in 1876, had suffered from *rishta* 8 or 9 times a year, and in the year of my visit 12 times, whereas he himself came a year earlier, had taken no care as to what water he drank, but had not been attacked until 1882. It may readily be supposed that I had no wish to be the first to bring this parasite from Bokhara to England ; and, accordingly, on crossing the frontier, I gave up teetotalers' beverage, and drank no longer water—that is, in its natural condition. But neither did I take to wine, but making more tea than we needed, the surplus was kept for

consumption cold, and thirst allayed after a meal by melons or fruit.

As they would not allow me to visit the prisons in Bokhara, I took care to make what inquiries I could about them; and happened to hit upon a man who, when crossing the Steppe, made a vow that if God would bring him safely to the end of his journey, he would spend 7 tengas in bread for the prisoners in the Zindan, *i.e.*, dungeon, or town prison of Bokhara. He was too wise to give the money to the keeper, but, having brought the bread, asked leave to distribute it, whereupon he threw it down to the detained. He said their prison was like the baths we visited at Karshi—that is, a chamber entered and lighted from above. I asked him how many prisoners there were; and he replied, "From 300 to 400"; but I found this was a mere guess on his part, though he said he had heard the same from the Bokhariots, and that some of them had been confined there for 12 years. Each man received, he said, only a cake of bread in the morning, and another at night, whilst 2 prisoners, he said, were let out daily to beg, and, of what they received, half went to the jailer and half among all the prisoners.

My informant added that, if a man be accused of theft by two witnesses, the accused is beaten on one side 75 times with a stick as thick as the wrist, then 75 times on the other side, and lastly 75 times on his stomach, unless he confesses, in which case he is beheaded at once, or perhaps kept for a year and then let off. But if he does not confess he is sent to prison to heal, and then beaten again; and so on four or five times. If then he is not killed, he is allowed to go. Murder is punished by hanging or beheading. This informant corroborated the throwing of certain criminals from the top of the minaret, saying that, about 7 years before, there was a gang of robbers between Bokhara and Katte-Kurgan who were caught, and most of their

throats cut, and their bodies thrown in a heap at the frontier, but that the chief was hurled from the tower.*

Thus primed with information, true or false, I took occasion one morning, when the Kush-beggi's messengers came, to ask how many prisoners there were in the *Khana-Khaneh* and Zindan prisons; to which they replied, "Very few"; for that they did not keep them long, not even for 5 months, but speedily gave them 150 stripes, or beheaded, or released them. I asked if it were true that in the *Khana-Khaneh* ticks were kept alive to annoy and prey upon the prisoners. They somewhat indignantly denied it, saying that they had three sorts of prisons, the *Ab-Khaneh*, *Ben-Khaneh*, and *Khana-Khaneh*, representing better class, intermediate, and dark prisons. They also denied that prisoners were sent out into the town to beg; but this last denial was certainly a falsehood, for when we turned back from the lepers' village I asked one of the natives to take us back to the embassy in such a way that we might pass the Zindan prison. I saw that I had asked a hard thing, and at first he said it was more than he dared to do; but ultimately he was better than his word, and, looking up a passage as we rode along, I saw outside a lofty building two prisoners chained together by the neck, and who, on my approach, cried most piteously for alms, which I gave them, as also did Yakoob, whose heart was evidently touched. The building before me, I make no doubt, is the one that Khanikoff calls the "Zindan," saying that it has two compartments, the upper and lower dungeons, the former consisting of courts with cells, and the latter of a deep pit, at least 20 feet deep, into which the culprits and their food are let down by

* Throwing from a height would appear to have long been a recognized mode of putting to death in the East, and to remain so still. The men of Nazareth thus led our Lord to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong (Luke iv. 29), and in the very year of my travels this was one of the modes of being put to death said to have been offered by the Arabs to Professor Palmer and Captain Gill.

ropes. This latter I suppose to have been the one in which Colonel Stoddart was first placed. As for the Khana-Khaneh, I was told afterwards, I stood near the door when examining the great whip at the entrance to the citadel, but I did not know it at the time. It was from hence, I imagine, that Stoddart and Conolly were taken to execution, or from the *Ab-Khaneh*, said by Khanikoff to be also in the palace, but of which I heard nothing.

Of course we heard during our stay in the khanate something of the Emir's manner of life and family affairs. I asked the messengers one morning how his Majesty lived, and they confirmed what I had previously read, that he keeps a very simple table,—if indeed he can be said to keep a table at all as, I suppose, he sits on the ground to eat. Also I gathered that he spent but little, his only pleasures being dancing-boys and his wives. I ascertained that his feasting is confined to two occasions in the year, when he invites his officers; and I heard something, too, of wholesale feasts, facsimiles, I should imagine, of those given by David when “he dealt to every one of Israel, both men and women, to every one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine” (or grape cake?) (1 Chron. xvi. 3), the last, however, being replaced by the Emir with sweetmeats.* In the palace, certain men who stand in Muzaffar's presence, such as the travelled Khoja we met at Kitab, eat with him, but not at the same table.† “What does the Emir eat?” I asked. They replied, “Much the same as the fare provided for you, unless, perhaps, he might have the very best rice, and his soup a little richer.” He has three meals a day, namely, at sunrise, milk, tea, and perhaps meat and meal; his dinner about noon, the time of the mid-

* I heard, too, of the Zaketchi, or principal tax-gatherer, inviting the Mussulman merchants once a year at the time of the fast.

† As did Jehoiachin, King of Judah, before Evil-Merodach, King of Babylon (Jer. lii. 33).

day prayer ; and supper at eight. I thought to draw out the messengers to speak of his intellectual tastes, if he had any, by saying that our Queen spent time in reading. Does the Emir read much ? They said that on rising he reads, then transacts business, and afterwards reads again, but that he had not much leisure because of his work. The Emir has several *arbas*, they said, and, when going away for the summer, takes his books with him. This was in reply to a question of mine fishing for information as to whether there was in the palace any library, or anything that would give me any hope that it might be that of Tamerlane ; but when they spoke of taking his books away in an *arba*, I concluded they must mean his accounts and state documents. His Majesty speaks, I was told, only Turki and Persian.

I found that the simple question, "How many wives has the Emir?" elicited some very varying replies. One replied, "Many" ; another, "Thirty for certain."

This was, of course, a very delicate subject upon which to approach the Emir's messengers, especially as my conversation might be reported to his Majesty. Nevertheless, I thought it better to hear their answer to my question, "How many wives has the Emir?" They replied immediately, "Four." I said that I had heard it was 300, upon which they waxed warm, and said that I ought to know that one man would be no match for 300 wives ! They allowed, however, that his Majesty may have had 50 or 60 ;* "but," said they, "never more than four at a time !" and as to how he obtained them, the Emir had some sisters,†

* Thus emulating Rehoboam, who took 18 wives and 60 concubines, and begat 28 sons and 60 daughters (2 Chron. xi. 21).

† With this may be compared, though only in certain aspects, an old wife seeking a younger for Abraham (Gen. xvi. 3), and a mother seeking a wife for her son Ishmael (Gen. xxi. 21). I met with a case of this latter so recently as 1879, when a Russian mother, whom I saw on the Amur, was said to be looking out for a wife for her son, just finishing college, and who was then to be married as a qualification for ordination to the Russian priesthood.

aged wives, or other near relations, and that, when he wished to marry, they told him of girls they knew here or there. To this I added that I hoped they were not offended at my asking, but I thought it better to inquire than to go away with erroneous ideas. They thought so too, and said they were not offended.

So, in these pages, I have conceived that, in order to paint an accurate picture of Bokhariot life, the preceding paragraphs will convey more meaning than a whole chapter of my own opinions; and if the purity of the domestic hearth be any gauge, in forming an estimate of the happiness of a people, then English men, I think, and certainly English women, will have no reason to envy those of Bokhara.

As the time drew near for us to leave "the noble" Bokhara, I could not but feel that we had been most hospitably treated. Not that I supposed the Emir's conduct to be the expression of his personal regard for me or my country, but of his desire to please the Russians. I had been warned at Samarkand to be very careful not to lose my credentials, for if I did the Bokhariots would be only too pleased to insult me, and then to excuse themselves on the ground that I brought no papers. More than once I asked in Bokhara what would have been done to me had I come to the town without letters. One said we should probably have been sent back to the Russians; and another that we should have been placed in confinement, and the Russian authorities informed. No Europeans, they said, are seen in Bokhara but Russians, who themselves would have an unbearable time of it, if the Emir had power to oppress; but since he has not, the natives are outwardly civil, whilst they curse the infidels at heart, and the Emir is obedient to the Imperial will. The Russians, in fact, call him "*Nash Chelovak*," or "*our man*." We were told that if only an ordinary letter be sent from the Turkistan authorities,

the bearer is feasted, presented with 3 or 4 khalats, and supplied with money to return, whilst the number of khalats sometimes presented by the Emir to the higher officials at Samarkand and other principal places, it was said, would stock a clothing establishment.

My reception was, therefore, in keeping with the foregoing. One Russian had told me that, having a letter from the Governor-General, I need trouble for nothing; and another had prophesied that the Emir would give me ten times the number of presents that I offered; yet I confess that I was taken aback at the way in which I and my retinue were supplied with board, lodging, and attendance, to say nothing of presents. The splendour of my turquoise bridle, embroidered saddle-cloth, and robes of honour, dazzles all who see them, and they are rendered doubly valuable, of course, by the circumstances under which they were received. But besides these additional favours bestowed, it was as if another son of the East had said, "Howsoever, let all thy wants lie upon me."* Nor did I quite see in Bokhara how duly to acknowledge such thorough-going hospitality; but I went carefully through my kit for such things as I could possibly spare, and which I deemed might be acceptable to the Emir. There was first my india-rubber bed and pillows, which I thought might be a comfort to his Majesty's bones in case of illness. Accordingly I showed one of the attendants how to screw on the bellows and inflate the bed. This appeared greatly to tickle his fancy, though I doubt whether he had used a screw before. To this I added an excellent filter, to preserve his Majesty, I said, from *rishta*; a pair of mosquito curtains, the like to which I had seen nothing in the khanate; an electro pepper and salt case, presented to me by Messrs. Langton and Son, whose "travelling requisites" I have found so useful, besides an enamelled travelling bottle of their bringing out,

* Judges xix. 20.

that is by far the best I have seen ; also a fine damask linen tray cloth, and some smaller articles. These I packed, and wrote a letter telling the Emir that I was to leave on the morrow for Charjui, thanking him



THE AUTHOR IN ROBE OF HONOUR, WITH TURQUOISE BRIDLE, PRESENTED BY THE EMIR OF BOKHARA.

heartily for all the kindness and hospitality I had received, and begging him to accept, as a mark of my gratitude, the few things of European manufacture which he would find awaiting his return to the capital. I promised further to write again on finishing my tour

through his kingdom, and this letter I sent to the Kush-beggi to forward, as also two post-cards to be sent to the nearest post-office, 110 miles distant. The Emir takes the liberty of reading his subjects' letters, when they have any, and I thought he was welcome to study mine. The post-cards I sent were to inform friends of my safety up to date, and that I was now about to plunge into a land comparatively unknown, which I felt all the more because I had no handbook to accompany me.

I directed that we should start at sunrise on October 16th, and sent my parcel to the Kush-beggi, saying I had received so much kindness from the Emir, that I wished to offer some more presents. Yakoob, remembering no doubt the khalat given him at Shahr when bearer of a present, asked that he might take the parcel, saying that he had business upon which to speak to the Kush-beggi; but as Yakoob had served us, I thought, half-heartedly in Bokhara, I gave the job to more faithful Kolutch. Whether he received a tip I know not, but the cunning Kush-beggi, unlike the courtiers at Kitab, intimated, without my offering it, that he would be pleased to accept a present from England. I sent him something more of European manufacture, and then prepared to start, Sevier being employed up to the last in attending the sick. One of them, a woman, was considerably taken aback when he applied his ear to her chest with a view to the auscultation of her heart, such treatment by a doctor being evidently unknown in Bokhara.

CHAPTER XXX.

FROM BOKHARA TO CHARJUI.

Departure from Bokhara.—End of Zarafshan oasis.—Ruins of Peikand.—Approaching Kara-Kul.—Inexperienced postillions.—The sands of Sundukli.—Our tarantass left behind.—A night's lodging at Betik.

WE were escorted out of Bokhara at 9.20 a.m. by a *mirakhur*, or captain, of the Kush-beggi and three others of his men,* meeting in the suburbs many of the poor riding in on asses.† When well out of the city I turned for a farewell look at its battlements. It was the best specimen of a walled town I had ever seen—the first, strictly speaking, in which I had lodged, but wherein my actions had been so spied upon, that I confess to a feeling of relief as I left it behind. Our route lay at first through highly-cultivated gardens and fields on both sides of the road. Round the fields were ridges of soil to confine the water when let in to submerge the surface, and certain mounds of earth,

* The Bokhariots are still very observant of the Eastern custom of accompanying or bringing on their way friends, or those whom they wish to honour, as did Abram the angels going toward Sodom (Gen. xviii. 16); and the churches at Antioch and Tyre, the Apostles Barnabas and Paul (Acts xv. 3; xxi. 5).

† Some of the asses were laden with earth or sand in bags slung on either side, reminding one of the expression “two mules’ burden of earth” (2 Kings v. 17); and now and then we met women, or better said, perhaps, Bokhariot ladies, on white asses, which are more expensive than others, and so the property of the rich. Hence the expression in Judges v. 10, “Speak ye that ride on white asses.”

rising from the plain, were pointed out to us as being gradually carted away by the natives for the repair of their fields.

We were now approaching the termination of the oasis that extends more or less widely along the Zarafshan valley from Katte-Kurgan past Bokhara to Kara-Kul, and we had the opportunity of seeing a little of Bokhariot agriculture.

As we passed along I noticed late crops of jugara, bearded wheat, and cotton. Of this last plant I picked some pods, which I brought home. Yakoob gave us £1 per acre as the price of untilled land, but for cultivated lands three times as much. A noticeable feature, as we proceeded, were the farmhouses surrounded by walls, usually a dead flat, but sometimes crimped, and crossed with lines, each presenting the appearance of a miniature fortress. They were surrounded by gardens, and other efforts of Bokhariot culture. The gardens are formed of enclosed ground called *hazat*, the surface being levelled to facilitate irrigation. Those skirting our way for the first 11 miles appeared to belong to men in well-to-do circumstances. Next we came to a salt land, less fertile than the preceding, but such as might be cultivated.

At noon we passed the ruins of a large, mud-built castle, once inhabited by a wealthy family, and near this were two small hovels, where a bazaar, so called, held once a week, is visited by half-a-dozen people. We rode on 3 miles further, passing Khoja-Khairon, and arriving at 12.20 at Yaka-tut, or Jakatut, our worst mishap being that Sevier's horse, which had more than once stumbled, now fell, and pitched his rider over his head. Fortunately, however, he was not much hurt, though he literally "bit the dust." At this our first station we dined, and took leave of our old custodian Mirza Muhammad Yusuf. He had guarded us many nights and days, and I think had done his best to keep us from seeing too much, but

he was good-tempered, and put on no airs ; so I gave him a present, and we parted as friends.

We had now before us 21 miles to Kara-Kul, and by way of change we accomplished the greater part of the journey in the tarantass, though not without pains and penalties ; for our postillions were so little accustomed to their work, that they had no notion of avoiding stones or obstructions in the road, but took them all as they came, now going over banks made at the edges of the fields to keep in the water, and now turning the tarantass at right angles instead of a curve, to the imminent risk of an upset. The road, too, varied a good deal, sometimes passing over strips of sand only a few yards wide ; next, over an arid steppe ; and then through cultivated land and well-ploughed fields of next season's wheat, one of which I recollect appeared as clean as a flower garden.

On the left we passed what was given me as Shahan Khibar. They told us the heaps of ruins were those of an old town destroyed by the Caliph Ali, and soon we came to the half station Peikand, which is mentioned by Wolff. Burnes calls them "the ruins of Bykund," and throws light upon them from a history in manuscript he purchased in Bokhara, calling Bykund one of the most ancient cities of Turkistan, the seat of Afra-siab, and of the ancient Turkistan kings.

We stopped at Peikand some minutes only, and a little further on sighted the Zarafshan, no longer the broad, impetuous river we had struggled through at Samarkand, but a feeble, attenuated stream, robbed of its life-giving waters, and narrowed, as I judged, to a width of about 20 feet. The strip of cultivated land on either bank of the Zarafshan gets narrower, being pressed in by the desert ; and as we drove along between the aryks, we came here and there to hillocks of sand, among which we had to wind in and out. Of animal life there was little ; but we heard the singing of a lark, and, in addition to the ubiquitous rook, saw a flight of storks.

After driving thus to within a mile of Kara-Kul, we remounted our horses, and there came out to meet us the *amliakdar*, or tax-gatherer. He was the principal man of the village, and with him were several others, wearing dandy riding boots, of which the height of the heels would vie with those worn by English ladies, only that the point of the Bokhariot heels barely exceeded the size of a sixpence. As I rode along by the side of the *amliakdar*, my Diotrephe misbehaved himself, stumbled, and came down upon both knees, but, fortunately, I kept my seat, and he recovered himself. We then crossed by a substantial bridge what I supposed to be the Zarafshan, or a large canal diverted therefrom, and about sunset entered Kara-Kul.

Kara-Kul is a village that gives its name to the black, curly lambskins that are exported thence over a large portion of Central Asia. We stayed there for the night, and left early next morning, hoping to reach the Oxus in the course of the day. But we did not know what was before us, or we should hardly have brought the tarantass, for it became more and more apparent that neither the roads, the horses, nor the people were accustomed to wheeled vehicles of any kind, and still less to a European carriage. The horse-collars here appeared to have been made for the occasion, and instead of harnessing 3 horses to be driven from the box, the animals were mounted, as before, by 3 postillions, who, in turning a corner, made no allowance for the curve, but struck the vehicle against the wall. Things were not much better when we reached the open country, for they not only went over stones, ruts, and timbers, but, whilst smoking in turn their *kalian*, occasionally left the road to go across country, through wheat or melon fields, and consequently over the irrigation embankments surrounding them. But worst of all were the horrible bridges over *aryks*, fortunately then empty, but 8 or 10 feet deep, or, at

all events, sufficiently deep to make a fall therein a most undesirable event. Sometimes they avoided the bridges by driving down into the aryk, which was bad enough, but not so dangerous as crossing the rude constructions that were never intended for three horses abreast, and had no rails or guards on either side. To make matters a little worse, I could not get my charioteers to see the desirability of fastening the two wheelers to the centre horse, lest in crossing a narrow bridge one of the two outer horses might jib, the other two go on, and the whole concern go to smash. On the previous morning the tarantass did fall into an aryk, and took 20 men to get it out, but happily we were then on horseback; and now, with this careless driving, so fully did I anticipate a second edition of the accident, that I unbuttoned the apron, so as to be able to spring out at a moment's notice, as we came to bridges that the drivers seemed to be approaching with insufficient care. I twice jumped clean out, with my heart in my mouth, expecting to see a crash, though, fortunately, my fears were not realized. It was interesting to see messengers, spade in hand, sent on to prepare the way before us,* to exalt the valleys and make low the hillocks,† so that, thanks to their preceding us, after a drive of 16 miles, the most dangerous I had ever taken, we came to the end of the cultivated district, and stopped for refreshment at the Kishlak-Khoja-daulet-bi.

They gave us the distance from Daulet-bi to the Oxus as 16 miles, and a mile from the station the sand began to appear in good earnest.

Sevier and I mounted our horses and preceded the tarantass, the attendants asking us not to go too far ahead, lest we should be lost. When once fairly on to the desert we found ourselves amid surroundings the like to which I had never seen before, and would not

* Mark i. 2.

† Isa. xl. 4.

willingly experience again. The only vegetation was some dwarf bushes, a few inches high, under which ran here and there, like squirrels, the long-tailed marmot, and even these were soon left behind, and the bushes gave place to sand-dunes not unlike those found on parts of our own coasts. The shape of the hills was uniform, each presenting the form of a horse-shoe, the convex side being sloped towards the north, whilst the concave side was precipitous. Sometimes we saw a bar-khan had been formed by the walls of a house, with the result that it had continued to grow till the building was buried. Nothing appeared able to stay the advancing scourge, and the desolation of the scene was, in our case, heightened tenfold by a blustering wind, that drove the sand in our faces. As we looked ahead, one bare hill rose above another like waves of the ocean, whilst the tempest blew the sand from their crests like spray, and all this on a scale that strikingly brought to my mind the waves I had seen in crossing the Northern Pacific.

For 7 miles we dragged on to the frontier of the bekship, where we were met by 15 horsemen, who came to take our tarantass to the Oxus ; but imagine our dismay when we discovered that they had brought with them only one horse-collar ! They asked the party from Kara-Kul to lend them theirs, but they declined, took out their horses, and were making off.

The Amliakdar came to take his *congé*, and I gave him a present, but it was not till his back was turned that we realized our critical position. We were left like a boat in mid-ocean. All around was sand—sand everywhere—and our late protectors had pitilessly bolted. Sevier suggested that they should be forced to return, which perhaps might have been effected, with a revolver pointed at them. But it was too late, and we were obliged to turn to our new attendants, who stood discussing what was to be done, for there was not another horse-collar to be had within several miles.

My interference was no use, so I left the men to their own devices, whereupon one horse was put in the shafts, and ropes, fastened to the tarantass, were attached to the saddles of the rest, and in this novel fashion the vehicle was dragged along.

I thought, therefore, it would be best for Sevier and me, with Yakoob to interpret, to go forward and send back reinforcements. Moreover, a Russian officer in Samarkand had told me of the terrible difficulty we should have with the tarantass, and had given me a hint not to meddle in the matter. "If," said he, "the Emir gives the order that your tarantass is to be taken to the Oxus, it is their affair, not yours. You had better go on, and leave them to follow." I therefore took the chief man for a guide, and left the tarantass in charge of Kolutch and Fazul.

Our guide was an old man, but mounted on a good Turkoman horse, and him we followed over little mountains of sand. As we struggled on, we met scarcely any travellers, and wondered more than enough how they would get the carriage over the barkhans, as high as London houses. It was no small relief when, late in the afternoon, we came to a pool of water, said to be 3 miles from the kishlak Betik, after which we soon reached the house of our guide.

He turned out to be one in authority; Mirza Anvar Gwatchi, but it seemed that we cockney riders had thoroughly tired him out, in addition to which he received a sound rating from his belongings for going off with only one horse-collar. He at once sent a relief party off, who, by-the-bye, lost their way. Also a boy, whom we had met with an ewer of drinking-water, was clever enough to break it, and so it came to pass, as we afterwards heard, that, after making almost superhuman efforts, the horses not unfrequently falling and rolling in the sand in their efforts to get the vehicle over the hills, they could only approach to

within 5 miles of the station, where, darkness coming on, horses and riders alike, almost supperless and waterless, and thoroughly tired, lay down on the ground and slept. At 1 o'clock in the morning someone reached our station, and more horses were sent, with clover and food, so that later on the party consisted of 25 horses, 25 men, and 2 camels, besides our 2 mounted djiguitts. When the tarantass proved too much for the horses, they harnessed a camel to it; but this failing also, the goods were taken out, placed on a camel's back, and so the journey was finished.

Meanwhile, as we heard on our arrival that the river was only a few versts further on, and Charju just the other side, we determined to stay for the night. This appeared to give our hosts real pleasure, and we had a hearty welcome, though our room was exceedingly poor. It had this mark of distinction, however, that on the wall were stuck two little artistic productions, a few inches square, taken apparently from a traveller's tin of preserves. These were the only pictures I saw on the walls throughout the khanate. One attendant brought in a glass lantern worthy of the occasion, about a foot square and two feet high, and on the level bottom of this he was vainly trying, by letting fall some drops of grease, to make a tall candle stand. I bethought me of a clerical acquaintance, who, when beginning some cottage lectures among the poor of Birmingham, extemporized candlesticks out of turnips. We had no such roots at hand, but, slicing off the top of a melon, I made a hole and stuck in the candle, to the great wonderment of the native, who ran out with a laugh to tell his fellows what the stranger had done; and even Yakoob could not resist coming in to look at the invention, which he called "American." Thus finished the most remarkable day's travel I have known, and I certainly shall not soon forget the sands of Sundukli.

CHAPTER XXXI.

OUR STAY AT CHARJUI.

Departure for the Oxus.—Meeting of Charjui officials.—Our lodging and reception.—*Pilau* and native bread.—Visit to the Bek.—Received with music.—The place of execution, and the prison.—Charjui bazaar and slave-trade.—Administration of the khanate, and taxes.—The governments of the Tsar and the Emir, how respectively regarded by the Bokhariots.—Return from Charjui to the Oxus.—The tarantass regained.—Departure of our two attendants.

AFTER a breakfast of rice, milk, and tea, we started from the kishlak Betik at 7.30 to ride to the Amu-daria, leaving directions that the tarantass should not be brought on to the town of Charjui, but shipped in the boat waiting to descend the river. Five miles, we had been told, was the distance to the water, but it seemed much more, for our guide did not appear very well to know the way, and things were not rendered more pleasant from the fact that the weather had now become decidedly cold. Fortunately, I had strapped behind my saddle a Maude shawl, and having folded this around me in what the natives must have thought a queer fashion, we wended our way at first across fields of hemp or flax, and then passed over ground frosted with salt. As we approached the river, we made our roundabout way through acres of pampas grass and reeds overtopping our heads, waded some narrow streams, and then came to the famous Oxus.

So primitive in appearance was the boat to take us across, and so high in stern and prow, that one was tempted to think it a relic of the tribes that were crushed by the great Alexander. The oars were about the thickness of scaffold poles, with blades roped on, 10 inches wide by 30 long. Our horses were shipped, and we were rowed across to the opposite bank, where one Mama-sherif, an official called the Toksaba, came to meet us from Charjui. We were taken into a house in the midst of a garden, which in summer doubtless would have been pleasant enough, but crossing the river had not warmed us, and I was sufficiently chilled when they brought us a meal to ask whether they could give us also a fire. They assured us they would do all they could for the comfort of their guests, and shortly brought us "a fire of coals." It was a large brazier or octagonal pan, about 4 inches deep and 2 feet in diameter, filled with glowing charcoal. There was no fireplace in the room, and the floor was nicely carpeted all over, but the brazier was stood in a tray and placed beside us. I cannot pretend there was much heat to be got from it, but we could not stay long, since there remained to be accomplished what they told us was 3 miles.

On setting out they asked that we would not hurry, for it was customary for guests to proceed sedately, to which I rather demurred, saying that I wished to ride myself warm. We passed through fields to within about a mile of the town, where we gained the first view of its lofty fortress, whose outline seen from a distance was more picturesque than that of any building I had yet seen in the khanate. I asked the Toksaba the population of the town, and received another illustration of native ignorance when dealing with high numbers. He stated it at 100,000, and the population of the bekship at a million! after which he added that the place was only a fortress, with a thousand soldiers to keep the neighbouring Turkomans in order.

Thus we had arrived at Charjui, a distance, according to my reckoning, from Bokhara of 80 miles. The town was pleasantly situated; the fort occupying a knoll, and commanding a view of the whole neighbourhood. Our house stood by itself, near a stream, and, though not very sumptuous, they appeared to be doing their best to make us comfortable. It was not easy to feel so, however, deprived as we were of most of our toilet gear. But we were not to lack for food, and they had prepared for us such a *dostar khan* (literally "table cloth") as we had seldom seen. The trays and dishes were so numerous that I made a note of them. They more than covered the table, and were spread likewise on the floor. Our European decimal system was represented by 10 loaves of sugar, 10 packets of tea, 10 boxes of sugar-candy, 10 trays of sweets, and 10 trays more of parched peas,* pistachio nuts, natural and sugared, apricot stones, raisins of four kinds, flour cakes of grape honey and sugar, large and small cakes of bread, eggs coloured red, apples in syrup, almonds, dough-nuts of grape honey and flour, called *cantle neshullah*, and, lastly, a semi-liquid concoction of sugar and white of egg, that looked tempting, I suppose, to one of the officers talking to us, for in the absence of a spoon he extemporized one by putting in his finger, twirling it round, to make as much as possible stick, and then sucked it dry. They brought us some white fish to eat, which was not bad, but rather salt, and afterwards came pilau.

When extra good pilau is desired, a chicken is cooked in addition to pieces of mutton. This was a blessing to me, for not being fond of fat, or caring for rice, especially when greasy, I usually made my meal from the chicken and native bread. Their bread consists of unleavened cakes (*nans*), about the size of a large captain's biscuit, though sometimes

* Used, perhaps, as food in Persia by Daniel (i. 12); and by Abigail 1 Sam. xxv. 18.

larger and thinner, perhaps 9 inches in diameter. I think the latter is Persian, but both are made of wheaten flour, and when fresh are tolerably good, and much more to my liking than the rye and oaten breads of Russia and the Scandinavian peninsula. It is strictly "daily bread," and a native takes in a supply each morning as regularly as a Londoner purchases milk.* Nans cost 2 poolahs each, or about a penny for five.

Soon after our arrival at Charjui they asked how soon we should like to see the Bek. I replied, "Immediately." Seeing we had not our luggage, they asked whether I had my presents.† I replied in the affirmative, intending to take off the watch and chain I was wearing, and send them in with other articles small in bulk. They then said we should be received in two hours. The Bek proved to be another son of the Emir, and was living in some state in the fortress. At the entrance of the citadel, which resembled the one at Kitab, about 150 soldiers were drawn up. We were saluted with a fanfaronade of trumpets and other musical instruments—"plus bruyante qu' agréable," as Dr. Capus puts it—a grander reception than we received from the Emir. Attendants with white wands ushered us forward, and, finally, a military commander introduced us to his Highness

* The size of these cakes brought to my mind the friend coming at midnight and saying, "Lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me" (Luke xi. 6). An English child, accustomed, as I was, to great half-quartern loaves, might naturally wonder at the traveller's appetite, and why he should need so many as *three* loaves, but the text would present no such wonder to the mind of a Bokhariot boy. May not this also illustrate, and perhaps account for, the amount of "crumbs" that fell from the rich man's table (Luke xvi. 21), as well as the "fragments" of the miracles (Matt. xiv. 20)? The thinness of the bread, moreover, illustrates why we never read in Scripture of bread being cut, but broken, as in the Lord's Supper, and in Lam. iv. 4, "The young children ask bread, and no man *breaketh* it unto them."

† The common-place manner in which this was asked reminds one of Saul's words to his servant, "But behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man, for . . . there is not a present to bring? What have we?" (1 Sam. ix. 7.)

the Bek, a youth of 18 or 19, perhaps, dressed in a gold brocade and Cashmere turban. I apologized for not presenting myself in courtly apparel, since I had parted company with my tarantass, whereupon he asked us to stay longer. How long had we remained at Kitab, Karshi, and Bokhara? I told him the number of days in each, whereupon he asked why I stayed 3 or 4 days in other towns, and only 2 with him? * The reason was not far to seek, and I told him that we were already behind our time, that we had a long and difficult journey before us, and we begged in consequence that we might not be detained. He consented that our journey should be sped. I then requested to be allowed to see the prison, and also to ascend to the top of the fortress or some high place, my object, as before, being to get a bird's-eye view of this wonderful town of "100,000 inhabitants." To my surprise the Bek consented, after which I invited him to ask me questions. He had none to put, he said, but was willing to listen for an hour if it would please me. This was an unexpected turn of the tables, and I racked my brain for things that would give him some idea of the grandeur of England, but in vain: for he seemed to have no bump of wonder, or of inquisitiveness, and I gave up trying to enlighten the youth.

On leaving I examined some antiquated cannons lying about in the court, some old matchlocks and muskets hanging near the entrance, and also the musical instruments of the band. Later in the day I secured a wooden pipe, 16 inches long, with an expanding end, like a clarionet, called *surnoi*.† In

* Resembling on the surface the language of Jeremiah (xiv. 8): "Why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night?"

† It has 7 holes on the upper side and 2 below (one stopped). In the small opening is a brass mouthpiece. Into this fits a brass pipe, called a *nil*, with a mouthpiece of reed, and close to the mouthpiece a horn disc, serving as a support to the lips of the player. When not played on, the farther end of the pipe is stopped with a metal rod, and

addition to the *surnoi* and other instruments previously mentioned, there is used also in Central Asia the *kornoï*, a large brass trumpet, 6 or 7 feet long, giving a deep base note. Drums, too, of different sizes are used, made of small earthenware vessels, covered with skins, fastened on by a network of little straps, and played with two sticks. The soldiers appeared amused at my examination of their instruments, and I left them thinking that I was to be conducted to the top of the fortress.

Instead of this they took me outside the wall to a high place indeed, but whence I could not see the whole of the town, and I was beginning to regret, when my attention was called to an object the surroundings of which far outweighed my disappointment. "That is the gallows," said they, "where we hang the Turkomans—about 30 or 40 in the course of the year." I had the curiosity to ask what they did with the bodies, and their reply struck me at once as noteworthy. "Oh!" said they, "we pitch them in a ditch, or their friends come and take them away." How exactly, I thought, like the case of John the Baptist, when, beheaded by Herod, "his disciples came, and took the body and buried it."* The gallows

two small wooden discs cover the mouthpiece. Attached to the instrument (which may be seen in the ethnographical department of the British Museum) is a copper chain, and hanging therefrom 8 reed mouthpieces. For the mouthpieces, I suppose, would be used in some cases a *γλωσσόκομον*, which also served as a "purse" or cashbox (John xii. 6; xiii. 29).

* Matt. xiv. 12; Mark vi. 29. The place reminded me also reverently of One greater than the Baptist, for we stood on another Calvary, "a place of execution nigh to the city" (Luke xix. 20), "outside a city wall." As a further illustration it will be remembered that when the Jews wished that their approaching feast should not be marred by the sight of corpses remaining on the cross, they besought Pilate, not that they might be buried, as would be the case with us, but "that they might be taken away" (John xix. 31). The exposure of the dead bodies of the Turkomans is regarded by them as a defilement and an insult, and is evidently the survival of a very ancient custom, just as Jeremiah (xvi. 4) prophesied of his people, "They shall die of grievous deaths: they shall not be lamented, neither shall they be buried; but they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth." So again it was foretold by



CENTRAL ASIAN MUSICIANS.

consisted merely of two posts and a lintel, and after seeing it we went to the prison, into which I managed to get in spite of the Emir's endeavour that I should see none of his jails. He might well be ashamed of them, for this one at Charjui outdid everything of the kind I had seen. It was situated under a chamber at the gate of the fortress, and was about 10 feet square by 5 feet high. The one doorway was 3 feet high and 18 inches wide, and through it I crept into the dismal den, which had no window or ventilator, so that, when the door was shut, it was a veritable "black hole" of Calcutta, while the only thing in the chamber was a thick beam down the centre of the earthen floor, wherein the feet of the prisoners might be confined.* Six prisoners were under arrest, wearing iron collars, through the ends of which a chain was passed to secure them all together, and with a spike at the end to fasten into the wall. Most of the criminals, they said, were sent to the capital quickly, but some of the present batch had been confined 3 months, and, to make matters a little worse, we heard next morning that 5 Turkomans had been caught in the Steppe during the night, all of whom had been thrust for the present into the black hole. Thus there would be 11 persons within 500 cubic feet of air, which is not much more than half the amount allowed to each prisoner in Newgate, where the cells measure 14 feet long, 8 broad, and 8 high. The only good things I remember about this prison were that it was dry and

Jeremiah of Jehoiakim that "his dead body should be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost" (Jer. xxxvi. 30), whilst the other custom regarding the deceased's friends throws light on Acts viii. 2, "devout men carried Stephen to his burial," as also it emboldened Joseph of Arimathea, the timid disciple, to prevent desecration of the body of his Lord by undertaking the office of a friend when he went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus (Matt. xxvii. 58).

* Illustrating exactly Acts xvi. 24, "Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison and made their feet fast" (*εἰς τὸ ξύλον*) "in the beam," the definiteness of the article apparently implying it to be an ordinary feature of an Oriental prison.

fairly clean, nor did I detect any unpleasant smell, though the prisoners were said to leave it only when necessary, and never at all for exercise. I managed to get into my hands one of their iron collars, and asked where I could get one like it.* They said, "In the bazaar," whereupon I retained the one I had for my collection of prison curiosities, and gave the man the sum he named wherewith to purchase a substitute.†

On our way to the prison at Charjui we passed through the bazaar. This used to be a great place for slaves, brought thither by the Turkomans, who kidnapped them from the Persian frontier. M. Stremoukhoff, writing the year after my return in the *St. Petersburg Gazette*, says, "Although the slave markets in Bokhara are officially closed, and although it is strictly prohibited to trade in slaves, yet slaves are sold and bought with perfect freedom in all parts of the country, and the Emir himself takes an active part in this traffic for the replenishment of his harem, as well as of his coffers."

When on the spot, I did not suspect that the trade was still carried on, but Colonel Stewart tells me that,

* It is comparatively light, and the iron not so thick as the little finger, but I had seen nothing like it in Europe. Manacles, or chains for the hands, referred to as worn by Jeremiah (xl. 4) and Peter (Acts xii. 7), and perhaps Paul (Acts xxviii. 20), I did not see or hear of among the natives of Central Asia.

† I had now seen or heard of at least three kinds of prisons in Bokhara illustrative of similar places of confinement mentioned in Scripture. That at Charjui might be compared to the common prison (*ἐν τηρήσει δημοσίᾳ*) of Acts v. 18; the *Zindan* at Bokhara calls to mind Jeremiah's dungeon, into which he was lowered by cords (Jer. xxxviii. 6), whilst the prison in the palace of the Khan of Khokand, and the Kana Khaneh in the palace of the Emir, remind one how Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, situated in the King of Judah's house, or that (Jer. xxxii. 2) whereinto Joseph was thrust, under the captain of the guard—a place that is not for ordinary felons, but where "the king's prisoners were bound" (Gen. xxxix. 20). The Turkomans, when caught on the Persian side of the desert, would appear to fare worse than at Charjui, for less than a week before writing this I met Colonel Stewart, who has been living on the frontier, and who tells me that one Persian prison he came to was a well in a house, down which Turkoman man-stealers and their food were lowered, and the well *shut in with a covering* at night!

on inquiry, he learned that whilst there is no buying of slaves in Khiva, yet that Persian girls can be, and are, sold at Charjui, and, as he left the neighbourhood only a few weeks before telling me this, I think it well to state the allegation openly, and with his permission thereby to corroborate the letters of M. Stremoukhoff, which state that this trade is not yet completely stamped out in Bokhara.

I added to my Bokhariot curiosities from the bazaar at Charjui another kind of skull-cap, and coming out of Bokhara I secured a curious implement for driving donkeys. It consists of a thick handle about 6 inches long, with a goad at the top, and two thick depending chains about the same length, but united at the ends by a ring. I am not aware that the chains are used for striking the animal as with a whip, but rather (as I saw them employed) the chain is made to fall lightly on the shoulder, according as the rider wishes the animal, which is unbridled, to turn to right or left.

On returning to our lodging, it seemed as if the Bek were minded that we should come to no harm in the night, for he sent a guard of 16 soldiers, 4 to each side of the house. I cannot say much for their arms, for they were old enough, and on two of them I found stamped, in my mother tongue, "Wolley, Serjeant, and Fairfax."

I asked about taxes, but got widely-divergent answers in various parts of the khanate. I think I gathered that $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. was the proper tax, but that, as a matter of fact, the beks took more and more, and as much as they pleased.*

I was curious to know with what feelings the Bokhariots regard their Emir, and the possibility of the occupation of the khanate by the Russians. I

* Reminding one of the publicans, or tax-gatherers, in Judea, who came asking, Master, what shall we do? He said, Exact no more than that which is appointed you (Luke iii. 13); and of Zaccheus, who, when he found he had so done, restored fourfold (Luke xix. 8).

heard on Russian soil, with other chit-chat, that the Emir had more than once asked the Russians to give him a pension, and take his khanate. A native told me also that though the Bokhariots were on the whole satisfied with the Emir, yet at his death, he thought, they would be ready for Russian occupation. Muzaffar had recently been ill, at which time the people were ready even to welcome the Russians, who were liked, he said, at Samarkand, though not at Khokand, but neither, he added, did these last care for their own Khan. Another informant said that, from talks he had had with the people, he fancied the Bokhariots would prefer Russian to native rule. I asked how, under ordinary circumstances, on the sovereign's death the succession would go. They replied that the Emir had several sons (about 10 adults, 15 boys, and a number of daughters unknown), and that he who had the strongest party of followers would fight for the throne. Perhaps it was to prevent such a free fight that the Russians quartered a good many troops in Samarkand when the Emir was ill. One native expected in that event that, if the Russians advanced, the Bokhariots would be goaded on by the mullahs to fight. But this was mere supposition on the part of irresponsible persons, and of course it was a very delicate subject for me to approach with the Kush-beggi's messengers. I did, however, make bold to introduce the subject one morning by asking whether the Emir were quite recovered from his illness, and, upon their replying in the affirmative, I intimated that I had heard the people were ready, if his Majesty had died, to welcome the Russians. I thought these courtiers approached the subject like men whose inmost fear was, "The Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation."* They cautiously replied that the people were content with the Emir.

On the evening of our stay at Charjui they offered to send us *batchas*, and I accepted them for the sake of

* John xi. 48.

Yakoob and the natives, who were said to have the chance of seeing such performances only when a visitor came; but we did not keep them late, being anxious to get to bed and start early in the morning. Of the three boys, one sang and danced unusually well, and it was amusing to see one stout old man drinking tea, looking admiringly on, and getting heated with excitement.

Next morning I stirred up Yakoob before sunrise, and tried hard to put the Toksaba in a bustle; but it is not easy to hurry Asiatics. The Bek, they said, must be informed of our departure, and this took some time; but when the messenger returned he brought with him presents of khalats, a horse and saddle-cloth for me, and khalats for Sevier. Meanwhile our groom had arrived with the agreeable intelligence that the tarantass was shipped and awaiting us some 11 miles off at Ghuzari-Tozakar. This hanger-on also put a scrap of paper into my hand to inform me politely that he wished to quit my service (to which, by-the-bye, I had never engaged him), and return to Bokhara, Yakoob pleading that he had been very useful in taking care of my stud. In due time, therefore, we started once more for the Oxus. It was a bright, fresh morning, too cold by half to think of sedate riding, so, as soon as we reached the fields, I galloped off, leaving those to remain behind who pleased. One of the Bek's djiguitts had no mind to be outstripped, and took care to keep ahead. I followed his fleet horse, and we covered the distance in about an hour and a half.

Arrived at the Oxus, we found a tent put up for us, with bedsteads, in case we had returned to sleep, and Fazul and Kolutch ready to give us the story of their difficulties with the tarantass. They had dragged it over the sand barkhans, actually without a scratch or a visible strain, and it was now safely shipped for our departure. Yakoob, by agreement, was to go on with us at least to Petro-Alexandrovsk, whilst Fazul and

Kolutch were to return ; and the latter asked that I would write a note to General Korolkoff to say how they had served me. I had only to complain of one peccadillo, which was, as Yakoob had officiously informed me, that when I had sold the two horses at Bokhara, Kolutch had seized the two wooden saddles, sold them for a trifle, and appropriated the money. Accordingly, after giving Fazul his present, and paying the groom with a Cashmere khalat, of which I did not know the value, but was afterwards told it was worth three or four times as much as I supposed, I took Kolutch alone and quietly lectured him. He was distressed on being accused, said he thought the saddles were of too little value to be of importance, and urged that, had he wished to steal, he could easily have done so when in charge of the tarantass. I tried to show him, however, the importance of honesty in trifles, and then wrote a letter saying how well Fazul and he had served us, as indeed they had. This I gave him with his present, added a pound of tea for each of the three, and bade them farewell.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FLOATING DOWN THE OXUS.

Prospect of floating 300 miles on the Oxus.—Our boat, and escort against the Turkomans.—Journey to Kheradj.—Rough hospitality.—Journey to Ustik.—Compulsory service of boatmen.—Geological phenomena.—Arrival at Ildjik.—Change of boat and oarsmen.—A Bokhariot “Siberia.”—Arrival at Kabakli.—Sheep attacked by wolf.—Visit from the Bek.—Departure from Kabakli.—Ruins on the banks and *tugais*.—Precautions against robbers.—Native information.—Uzbek notions of a future life.—Singing oarsmen.—Flora of the river islands and banks.—The “Pitniak Curve” and “Lion’s Mouth.”—A dumb journey thence by horses.—Shurakaneh.—Arrival at Petro-Alexandrovsk.

THE prospect of floating 300 miles down the Oxus, not in a puffing steamer, but in a fashion as ancient as the days of Noah at least, was to me a new sensation, and one heightened in interest by the recollection that over this part of my journey at all events no Englishman had ever preceded me. The native boats are rude, flat-bottomed barges, built of logs of *paki* wood, chipped square, and cobbled together with iron clamps. It was in a craft of this kind we were to descend the river from Charjui, a willow-built barge, of the value of about £22, 50 feet long, 10 feet in beam, and 4 feet deep, drawing perhaps 18 inches of water. The gunwale was just low enough for me to reach over, sponge in hand, and get an apology for a morning wash. Such boats would make an admirable bridge, and the river bed offers excellent anchorage. These Bokhariot boats are said to carry

150 passengers and 20 tons of cargo, or 20 mounted men with their horses, which I should think close work for a journey, though it might do for a ferry passage. In our own case, we were favoured, as the Emir's guests, with a boat to ourselves. The tarantass was placed amidships, and abaft were five horses of mine and one belonging to Yakoob, whilst the fore part was occupied by 8 oarsmen, with two as a guard, besides Khudaiar Bek, a Karaul-beggi, to look after us. The authorities, moreover, not content with giving us guards against Turkoman robbers in the boat, furnished us also with five horsemen to ride along the shore. These latter were presented to us at Guzhari Tozakar, after which they got into a ferry-boat with horses and camels, and crossed to the east bank. The river here, they told us, was 2,000 *kadarm* in width, or rather less than 2,000 yards. There were no houses near, yet the crossing ferry-boat and the crowd attracted, I suppose to see the foreigners start, made rather a lively scene. We stepped on board at 20 minutes past 1, the Muhammadans giving a parting blessing, and stroking their beards as they shouted *Allah akbar!* (the mighty God!), and *Yakshi sagat!* (a pleasant journey!)—the former intended, I suppose, for the "faithful," and the latter for us "infidels."

We soon found ourselves on the bosom of a rapid current, and the wind was also in our favour, but it was rather too cold to be quite pleasant. Faraub and Betik, on our right, were left behind; and on our left, after floating 3 miles, seven aryks were diverted from the river, going in the direction of Khoja Kala, an inhabited district with 7,000 dwellings.

At 2 o'clock we passed a wide expanse of land, evidently covered in the time of flood, and on the bank were fishing nets. In half an hour trees were visible a mile off on the left, and the depth of the water near the left bank was less than 5 feet. At half-past 3 we were proceeding in a very undignified

manner. The wind blew us against the west bank, and the prow and stern being "much of a muchness," the steering, too, being done by an oar instead of a rudder, the boat was allowed to perform a series of gyrations in obedience to the sweet pleasure of the stream. Up to four o'clock we had seen only 3 men ashore and met two boats being tugged up the stream. Five o'clock found us still hugging the left bank because of the wind, the only visible reminders of human kind being the banks of aryks. Half an hour later the first small house was sighted on the left bank, and soon afterwards the moon rose, and we floated on till 7 o'clock to Kheradj, where we were to stop the night, thus accomplishing 30 versts only out of the 435 (as measured by the stream), from Charjui to Petro.

What good things they may have prepared for us in the village I know not. We were pointed to a dim line in the far distance, as a haven of rest and refreshment, but on the water's edge there was no tent erected, and not a creature to be seen, and I did not care to go so far away and leave my tarantass to the tender mercies of the first band of Turkomans that might happen to come along. I therefore declined with thanks to go so far, and a fire was made on shore, some Oxus water heated, and we sat in the smoke drinking our evening tea. Afterwards I retired to the tarantass to write my journal, leaving Sevier on the bank with the party round the fire; and as I looked out upon them I could not but be struck with the peculiarity and novelty of the weird picture. Our valiant guard of cavaliers, not a ghost of whom we had seen all day, found us out at feeding time, and swelled the party to about a score. One wore a turban of red, white, and blue; Yakoob had on his Tatar cap and cassock-like robe; Sevier had arrayed himself in European smoking-cap with his fur khalat purchased in Bokhara; and then, far outnumbering these, was the crowd of Uzbeks, with their tanned, swarthy faces.

They drank tea, and lay round the fire to sleep, whilst Sevier and I arranged ourselves in the tarantass, and thus spent our first night floating down the Oxus.

The next day we managed to accomplish 33 miles and reached Ildjik. I had read of the rough delights of taking a meal in primitive fashion round a camp fire; but when it came to be realized at breakfast time on the morning of 20th October, on the muddy bank of the Amu-daria, a great deal of the sentiment vanished. My thermometer had fallen during the night to 7° below freezing point, and at six o'clock the sun was far from hot, but we battled through a meal by the fire, and at 6.30 pushed off. Matters were not improved by the fact that our oarsmen considered they had now done their duty, for they expected here to have been met by a relay of men and another boat to carry us on. We learned, too, that the reason they had not continued the journey on the preceding evening to Ustik, as they expected to have done, was for fear of robbers. Since neither boat nor men were there, I was obliged to be firm, and insist that they should take us forward, promising that if they got us to Ustik by 9 o'clock I would give them a sheep to eat—the cost of the said animal being 12s. At 9.45 we passed on our right, the ruins of the fortress Ustik, perched like a stork's nest on the top of a mound of conglomerate loess, at the foot of which are some houses enveloped by the sand, whilst from the river we could discern cupolas among the ruins.

Ustik was a place with threescore dwellings, and the residence of a Toksaba, who was unwilling (and perhaps reasonably so) to let us have the only boat he possessed for the service of the ferry. At first he rather gave himself airs, whereupon I took out my pencil and note-book, solemnly asked his name, and wrote "Muhammad Ziphar," threatening to tell the Emir that the Toksaba had declined to carry out his Majesty's orders. This rather frightened him, and

he proceeded to explain in some way that he was acting for our advantage, and that he wished our men to take us on to the next station at Kabakli. It had been gradually dawning upon me, though "we were appointed a daily provision of the king's meat,"* yet that, by command of the Emir, we were served in travelling with forced labour. I first suspected this with those men who ran off and forsook us coming from Kara-Kul in the Sundukli sands. "They appeared to have been compelled to go a mile," and were certainly not minded to go with us twain.† So with our present oarsmen; they had not fulfilled the condition stipulated for the sheep, but I promised them that, and an additional present to take us on. To this they consented, but unwillingly, the distance by road to the next station, they said, being 11 miles.

After leaving Ustik we noticed, at 11.45, on both banks, rounded hills of sand and gravel, with the peculiarity that they were flattened on the top, and all at the same height, so that it was suggested whether these flat hill-tops did not represent, in a former geological epoch, the level of the country around, the mounds having been washed to their present form.

As the day advanced the weather improved; there was less wind, and by 4.20 the thermometer had

* Dan. i. 5.

† Matt. v. 41. A capital illustration of ἀγγαρεύω, which is a Persian word, and so, indigenous to the country we were in. In fact, I could not help thinking how closely the Persian customs observed in sending away Ezra and Nehemiah were re-enacted in my own case. "In any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts"; "let the expences be given out of the king's house" (Ezra i. 4; vi. 4). ("Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me.") "Moreover, I said unto the king, If it please the king let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river that they may carry me over" (Neh. ii. 9, 7). For my part, I did not ask for "a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us," though, when provided, I saw no occasion to decline it; but let me not forget thankfully to acknowledge with Ezra, that "the hand of our God was upon us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way" (Ezra viii. 22, 31).

risen to 64°. We now hugged the right bank, and at half-past six came to Ildjik or Ilchik. The Toksaba had preceded us, and was awaiting our arrival, bent, I fancy, upon extorting money if he could. Perhaps he had heard what I had promised the oarsmen. I had been warned as far back as Samarkand to be very careful, if I hired a barge, to make a bargain before starting. The Toksaba now asked us about paying for the boat. I simply replied that we were the Emir's guests, and were being provided with all things necessary to take us to Petro-Alexandrovsk by his Majesty's commands. To this charge he did not return, though he afterwards tried to have money dealings with me to his advantage, and also endeavoured to deceive me respecting the number of men at his disposal. They had erected no tent, and we had again to eat our supper by moonlight surrounded by Turkomans, whose swarthy faces beneath their sheep-skin hats looked grimly fierce in the glare.

Our next stretch of river was to Kabakli, or Kavakli, distant 47 miles. We were promised overnight by the Toksaba that a boat some miles off should be sent for, but in the morning it had not come. We proceeded, therefore, to breakfast leisurely in the open on cream, tea, chicken, bread and butter, and then looked around at some Turkoman boats and rough shelters they had constructed with their oars and poles and pampas grass, one of them having a hawk tied near. Meanwhile our Karaul-beggi, the five horsemen, and the oarsmen wished to return to Charjui, and proposed to take the tarantass out of the boat to be left on the bank till the other boat arrived; but this I forbade, having no wish to find myself stranded on the banks of the Amu. Moreover, I would have preferred to keep the boat we had, and I could not see how the carriage, without mechanical appliances, was to be transferred from one boat to the other. When at length the new craft arrived, it was older and smaller than

the one we had, but they called everyone to work, and, to my no little surprise, with their hands lifted the heavy machine out of one boat into the other. The Turkomans had lent their assistance, and I distributed three boxes of sugar-candy, not supposing that such a ragged-looking lot, whose only belongings appeared to be a few bales of tobacco, and those, perhaps, committed to them for transport, would have anything to offer in return; but, to my surprise, they offered a few nice-looking apples from Khiva, the first I had tasted, but of disappointing flavour.

We now dismissed our escort, and at 12.45 put off with only 3 oarsmen and the Toksaba, our two selves and Yakoob, and 5 horses. The quarrelsomeness of our horses was a constant nuisance. As they could not be tied other than close together, and Yakoob's steed threatened to kick Sevier's, it caused the latter incautiously to spring out of the way, and in so doing, much to his own surprise and ours likewise, to jump into the water. He had therefore to swim until the boat could be brought to land, whence he re-entered, with his courage evidently cooled. At 3 o'clock the right bank was from 10 to 15 feet high, and at 5.20 we came to sand barkhans, on the same side of the river, from 30 to 40 feet in height. After leaving Ildjik we overtook only one small boat, saw no houses, and only one man on the banks before night came on. The maximum temperature during the day rose to 63°, and the wind had so gone down that, as we drank our tea by moonlight, Sevier sitting on the box with a light and I inside, the candle for a long time was not blown out. They had given out on Thursday, when we left Charjui, that they expected to reach Kabakli in two days, and I had intended there to spend something like a quiet Sunday. Waiting for the boat, however, had hindered us, and I now urged the men to take advantage of the moon, and go on as far as possible during the night. This they consented to do

as long as they could see, after which we were to lay to till break of day. Accordingly, after tea, we turned in to rest, our slumbers being soothed by the ripple of the waters, and occasionally disturbed by the shouting of the men, when running on a bank. We stopped for only about 4 hours during the night, and by 8 next morning were opposite the Tash-akhur cliffs on the left bank. Fifteen versts further, beyond two wooded islands, we had on our left the ruins of Sengr Rabat, and on the opposite bank Chidari Kaya, in the Saradar or Soratas *tugai*, and by half an hour before midday we reached Kabakli.

The fame of Siberia as a place of exile is not unknown in Bokhara, and, in imitation thereof, the Emir is said to banish some of his criminals to Ustik, and on the other side of the flood to Charjui and Kabakli, which three places are called *à la Bokharienne*, Little, Middle, and Great Siberia.

We had approached Kabakli during the great Muhammadan feast of Kurban-Bairam, to which Yakoob had been looking forward, and the Toksaba asked me to sell him a silk khalat wherein he might attend the mosque in grand array, taking good care, however, to offer me little money and to say that he had no more. When we landed and despatched a messenger to the Bek to announce our arrival, he sent to say that prayers were over, and that he was receiving visits, but that he would shortly send a djiguitt or come himself to see us. Meanwhile a tent was erected for our use in a wood among stunted trees and stalks of pampas grass, one of which last I had the curiosity to cut, and found it measured 17 ft. 6 in. in length. This wooded tract of country we had had on our left for half an hour before arriving. Near at hand was a flock of sheep, and during our stay the shepherd came, saying that a wolf had just killed a sheep and was making off therewith, but, on being chased, dropped

it.* The shepherd said also that the Bek was on his way to us. We had dined in the tent, and it was now well on in the afternoon when the old gentleman arrived, so infirm that one almost wondered at his being able to mount a horse. I had once more to drain my stock of European articles for presents, and I gave him, among other things, my gorgeous, gold-embroidered, Servian vest that had done such good service, a pair of spectacles a ring, and some English needles. The one burden of my request was that he would send us forward to Petro-Alexandrovsk as speedily as possible, and with more oarsmen. He promised to give us two additional men and a mirza to represent himself, adding that, if the men did not bring us there in two days, they should receive five-and-twenty lashes. In the same breath, however, he intimated that in fine weather the journey took three days, whereupon I promised that if in that space of time they brought us there, I would give a present, but that if they failed so to do, I would let him know. I asked if it would expedite matters to have our horses sent by road, but he preferred not to undertake the responsibility of sending them. All else, however, that I asked he promised to do, and said that we should start early on Monday morning.

We slept that night, if I remember rightly, one in the tarantass and one in the tent, and early next morn-

* A modern illustration, I thought, of an ancient story: "Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock; and I went out after him, and delivered it out of his mouth" (1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35). The Kirghese on horseback hunt the wolf and beat him to death with their riding-whips, and the fighting of men with bears is said to be sometimes done still by the Gilyaks, amongst whom I travelled on the Amur in 1879. John x. 12 seems to contemplate the shepherd fighting the wolf, even to the laying down his life for the sheep. In the Caucasus, where wolves abound, I learned, in 1880, that the shepherds provide themselves with wolf-like dogs in large numbers to protect their flocks from beasts of prey, but I am not sure whether or no this practice obtains among the natives of Central Asia. Further down the Amu we saw a shepherd with his flock, but I do not remember anything about a dog. I learned, however, that the Bokhariot shepherds do not lead, but drive their sheep, which would seem to require the employment of canine help.

ing were astir. There were provisions, of course, to be taken in. The Bek sent no present, but provided us with fodder for 5 horses, besides 4 live chickens, bread, eggs, milk, cream, and melons. This was much the same as had been provided for us at Charjui. The Bek was spoken of as fond of turning a penny, and, though he had sent no present, they said he would purchase the bridles other beks had given me. I had more than I wanted, and offered him two by the hand of the Toksaba, for which he gave me two-thirds of what I asked. I had an offer also at the place for a pair of my horses, but not knowing whether I might not want them beyond Petro-Alexandrovsk, I declined to sell for less than £3 each, and took them on. The Toksaba had told us at Ildjik, as the reason for giving us only three men instead of the eight we had had from Charjui, that his men had run away; but we learned at Kabakli that it was a falsehood, for he had only three, of whom one was ill. I cannot say that I liked this official, and I was accordingly glad to give him his *congé* when he desired to return.

The journey before us to the Russian frontier beyond Ust-Uchak measured by the bed of the river 113 miles. We launched forth at 7.10 on a morning cloudy, but not windy, and after rowing 7 miles, passed on our left the ruins of Katta-kala, and after 7 miles more, arrived at 10 o'clock at the Bish Arandjan tugai, with the ruins of Uch-Keran (seemingly also called Kavakli), on the left bank, whilst opposite are two ruined castles, with a legend worthy of the banks of the Rhine.

One is called Kyz-kala, or Maiden fortress, and the other that of her lover, Im- or Djiguitt-kala. The legendary origin of these two was given me as follows: About 400 years ago there lived a princess, who did not wish to be married, whereupon she ran away into the Steppe, and built Kyz-kala, wherein to live in single blessedness. Her lover followed, and erected Djiguitt-

kala near, but to no purpose ; for the damsel remained obdurate. Soon, however, it came to pass that she was at a loss for water, and determined to excavate a subterranean way to the river ; but the lover discovered this, and stopped it up, whereupon the princess fled, and her lover after her, and they were never heard of more.

At 10.15 we came to three boats near the bank, and 8 miles from the lovers' fortresses we passed, on the left hand, the ruins of Eshik-rabat, in a tugai of that name, and a little further on were the ruins of a fortress and tomb, named after a saint, one Kitmenchi baba. Opposite is the large Shurtankali tugai, 4 versts along the bank, and on the map is marked the Tekke ferry, the first below the one at Kabakli, where, by the side of the place we landed, we had seen a Turkoman barge proceeding in the same direction as ourselves. At 3.20, the banks on the right I judged to be from 40 to 50 feet high, and sandy. Yakool here went ashore to find some large stones, if possible whereon to rest his kettle in the boat during cooking operations, but he was obliged to return with lumps of earth. At 4.15 we had on our right the Gurl tugai, where we saw a shepherd with a staff indeed but straight, the Bokhariot staff having no crook.

At sunset the men wished to stop. This I endeavoured to prevent, reminding them that my reward was offered on condition of their bringing me to Petro Alexandrovsk in three days. They said, however, that the mud banks rendered navigation perilous by night and they drew to land ; but hearing there that the Turkoman boat, which left Kabakli before us, had passed only an hour before, they put off again, caught up the craft, and stopped alongside for the night.

I suppose that our men sought the company of this friendly Turkoman boat as a precaution against robbers, for we were now in the most dangerous part of our course. Our men were evidently shy of travelling after dark. One evening they wished to

stop soon after six o'clock, and, in answer to my urging them on, they replied by a threefold argument,—that I was in the first place the guest of the Emir; secondly, the guest of the Kush-beggi; and, thirdly, the guest of their own Bek. Consequently, being responsible for our safety, they did not like to venture further for that night. Tekkes, however, were not the only foes we had to fear, for just before going to rest one night, Yakoob came from shore to say they thought there were wolves about, and asked me to let off 2 or 3 pistol-shots to scare them away. I emptied 3 barrels of my revolver into the air. Whether or no the wolves were frightened I know not, but the horses were, and it was well they did not take it into their heads to break loose.

We started on Tuesday morning at 6.15, and soon after saw a jackal (they call it *shakal*) on the left bank. At 8 we breakfasted, on coffee, cream, cold chicken, and bread and butter; and at 10 our head cook came for orders for dinner. I said, "Soup as yesterday; a boiled chicken; and, for a third course, rice-pudding, with milk and eggs and sugar. To be served at one." We had met, an hour and a half before, a boat with a very rough-looking crew, from whom we had obtained, by borrowing, begging, stealing, or some law of exchange unknown to me, an extra man and a kettle, concerning which latter, when the dinner came, we asked no questions, but ate what was given us. We were now becoming somewhat accustomed to roughing it, and, besides, the weather was becoming more agreeable.

At 11 o'clock we went on shore, near the hut of a solitary fisherman, who, to my surprise, had in his possession a Russian breech-loading rifle, the only one, so far as I remember, that we saw in the Bokhara Khanate. He had shot some wild animals and caught a young hawk, which he sold me. They snare hawks and young eagles by tying a sparrow on a fishing net, in

the meshes of which the bird of prey, as he pounces on his quarry, entangles his claws.

I liked the men we had from Kabakli better than any of the previous sets. The old Bek had been not only as good as his word, but better; for, in addition to the three men from Ildjik, who were content to go forward with us, he gave us three oarsmen, also an Issaul- (or Yessaul)-Bashi, or centurion, named Hadji Muhammad, and a Mirza, or secretary, Jurabai. The last two, as well as Yakoob, I think, occasionally took their turn at an oar as volunteers, and I made further use of them in calling them to the tarantass, and pumping them with questions. They said the Amu begins to rise in April, is high in May, June, and July, but highest in June,* and lowest at the end of November.†

The Mirza carried about him, in a long, narrow, Chinese-looking box, his trade implements, reed pens, ink, penknife (truly so called), and scissors wherewith to cut paper. I was taken with his scissors, which were so made that the hole for thumb and finger were placed not by the side of, but behind, each other, and thus the instrument, when not open, measured barely half an inch at the widest part. He gladly exchanged them for an English pen and pencil case, and I added them to my collection of curiosities. As he was supposed to be educated I asked him sundry questions on religious matters, and among others what were his notions of a future life. He said, that as a man dies, so he remains until the resurrection, when, the earth being flat, the dead grow out of it like grass. Then God divides the bad from the good: the bad He sends to hell, and the good to heaven. Heaven is a place, he said, where persons live immortal, and where every wish is fulfilled; but then the Mirza added, what hardly agreed

* Thus it might be said of the Oxus, as of the Jordan, that it "overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest" (Joshua iii. 15); both rivers being fed by the melting of snow on the mountains about their sources—the Lebanon and the Pamir.

† All old style.

with the foregoing statement, that the creditor there might seek out his debtor, and though he could not demand his money, yet if the debtor were a good man, and the creditor a sinner, the creditor might take away the virtue of all the debtor's good deeds, so appropriating them as to be saved thereby.

In the course of the day the men asked permission to sing Bokhariot and Turkoman songs, and, of course, we consented. One man, for want of a tambourine, took a basin, and they sang the praises of their heroes, but Turkoman singing is very monotonous.

Our gondoliers told us on Tuesday night that we had made during the day 12 tashes, as also, they said, 11 tashes the day before; but we put little confidence in their statements, since they seemed to reckon pretty much by the rule of thumb. Starting next morning, however, at 6.15, in two hours and a half we came within sight of Uch-Uchak.

Uch-Uchak derives its name from "three hills," whereon they fancifully say a kettle might be placed as on a tripod. Here, at 9.45, we went ashore, the centurion's business being to look after a man, who had under cultivation 130 acres of linseed, besides other crops. In the previous year he had sowed one batman of seed, and reaped, they said, a hundred batmans, but this year the floods had destroyed his harvest, and he professed to have reaped nothing. Consequently the Bek had told the "Issaul," or centurion, to look at the land. The farmer was found and presented to us, and a very rough object he was, without stockings, and with a skin resembling leather. He was reported, however, to employ 12 men, and lived in the village, so-called, of Uch-Uchak, not visible from the river. At 3.15 we had, on our left, the Sadivar ruins, and opposite, on the right bank, the ruins of Meshekli, whose clay walls and towers form a small square. At the time of the Russian invasion, in 1873, these were said to have been well preserved, and apparently not long deserted. At

4 o'clock the Mirza went on shore, professedly to get melons, but I fancy to execute some other commission. I followed him for some distance, through reeds, long grass, and bushes of tamarisk, but found him going too far, and returned.

This gave me a short opportunity of seeing something of the vegetation on the banks of the Amu. It is poor enough, and generally saline. Where the banks are not inundated one meets with scrub jungle, and thickets of briars. Also, where the banks are inundated for a season, there spring up, on the receding of the water, a few annual plants. These, with the vast beds of pampas grass, and the variegated colours of the tamarisk, afforded occasionally a little relief to what was otherwise a dreary, and I must also add a lonely, landscape, for we saw scarcely any inhabitants.

The Mirza came at last, bringing melons, which did not, however, atone for the long time he kept us waiting, so that our two stoppages had been a decided hindrance, and, to make matters a little worse, we ran aground towards evening on a mud bank. Upon this the men first got out and waded about the river to find the channel, and then the horses were taken out. After this, the boat being floated, all were reshipped, and we went on till 2 o'clock. The temperature during the preceding night had sunk to 36° , and rose during the Wednesday to 87° ; but a change of weather was coming, and on the Thursday morning a strong wind blew, rendering our progress slow.

We were now approaching a remarkable portion of the river, termed by the natives "Touja-moujoun," or Camel's Hump, and by the Russians Pitniaksy-louka, or the "Pitniak bend." It is perhaps the sharpest curve of the Amu throughout its course—certainly so after leaving the mountains. The arc measures 13 miles round, and 4 miles across.

We passed the sand barkhans on the right bank, and

the tomb of Bazerviak opposite Uch-Tiube, and about 2 o'clock were approaching Pitniak, and, just beyond, on the right bank, the fort Kurtli (built by the Khivans to oppose the Russians in 1873, and from whence the natives fled on the enemy's approach), when our men told us that we were only 9 miles distant by land (though much further by water) from Petro-Alexandrovsk. I determined to escape the slow journeying by boat, and to proceed on horseback, the Mirza and Centurion undertaking to bring us there. Accordingly we charged Yakoob to accompany the tarantass, and to bring it, with all our belongings, to Petro-Alexandrovsk, whilst Sevier and I, and the two Bokhariots, were to ride.

I little knew what we were undertaking; but we started in excellent spirits. Our horses, after standing so long in a leaky boat, were delighted to use their legs. The Centurion had asked Yakoob privately, before we started, whether we were fast riders or slow, and, as Yakoob told him unhesitatingly the former, we set off at a dashing pace. Our route at first lay over a desert almost as bad as the sands of Sundukli, save that here and there were bushes of tamarisk, but no footprints were visible. At length we recognized the tracks of camels' feet, and knew that we had struck the Khiva-Bokhara caravan-route. Then, turning to the left, we entered the cultivated region of Ak-Kamysh, supplied with water by aryks from the right bank of the river beyond the point where we had left it. We passed Turkoman farms with *havlis*, or fortress-like farm-houses, and had gone on some miles when the Centurion and I, being ahead, missed Sevier and the Mirza. At first I thought nothing of it, supposing they would catch us up, but when this did not happen I began to get uneasy. The Centurion galloped about, but could see nothing of them. At length we mounted a knoll, and saw them coming, Sevier in the gallop having lost his overcoat, had gone back to seek

and fortunately to find it. As the afternoon grew, and we had ridden fast, I began to think the 9 Bokhariot miles were uncommonly long ones, and matters were worsened by the fact of our being unable to ask any questions. We could only make signs to our guides, who I was afraid did not know the way, and, if they did, could communicate nothing. They kept pointing ahead, and, as the sun began to go down, I saw on the horizon a belt of trees that reminded me of those planted by the Russians at Tashkend and Vierny, and from the nodding of the men we thought we must be within sight of our destination. My Diotrephe sustained his character, and kept on well ahead; but it was bitterly disappointing, when almost dark, on reaching the trees, to find we were not at the end of our journey. Moreover, it now grew cold, and "the fun of the thing" was all gone, to say nothing of want of food.

At length we came to a collection of houses, and could make out from the men that it was Shurakaneh, which is about 5 miles east of the river. It was nearly dark when we passed through the bazaar, which looked very small, but remarkably strange, since many of the houses were built in havli fashion, though opening on to the street. The place appeared empty, and we looked in vain for signs of Russians. Presently, beyond the bazaar, we crossed an aryk by a wooden bridge that was unmistakably of European build, and this revived our spirits for a moment, thinking we must be near Petro-Alexandrovsk. But a greater trial of our faith awaited us; when, passing on, we seemed to leave every human being behind, and were making once more for the desert, and to travel there, too, in the dark! I confess to not liking this, for the guides were unable to give us any idea how much further we had to go; we were leaving habitations behind for sand in front, and I had heard too much of Turkomans to have unbounded faith in their honesty. It was of

no use, however, to object, and I was resigning myself with a heavy heart when the Centurion, going on ahead, saw, from a hillock, something that caused him to exclaim, and very shortly I did so too ; for in the distance were visible a row of lighted windows that I knew must belong to houses of Europeans, and it proved to be the windows of the Russian barracks, 4 miles from Shurakaneh, at Petro-Alexandrovsk. It subsequently appeared that the distance we had ridden, instead of being 14, was 40 versts—that is, 27 miles instead of 9. This, however, was soon forgotten, for on presenting my letters we received a welcome from Madame and General von Grotenhielm, the Governor, in whose house we were not sorry to return once more to the comforts of a Russian home.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OUR STAY AT PETRO-ALEXANDROVSK.

By what route homewards?—The Orenburg and Aralo-Caspian routes.
—A social evening at the Governor's house.—Change of weather.
—Petro-Alexandrovsk and its institutions.—Proposed desert journey.—Arrival of tarantass.—Distribution of Scriptures.—Results of Bible work in Siberia and Central Asia.

A QUESTION of prime importance to be discussed on our arrival at Petro-Alexandrovsk was, "How should we get away again?" We had lighted for a moment upon an oasis of civilization, but "many miles from everywhere," and so completely desert-locked, that we could not proceed in any direction without crossing hundreds of versts of sand. We were 400 miles west of Tashkend, in which direction there is a route, on Russian territory, followed, I suppose, by Conolly when going from Khiva to Khokand, and striking the Russian post-route at Jizakh. Another route attaining at Perovsk the Tashkend-Orenburg post-track would be by the one just mentioned as far as the Bukan-Tau, and then proceeding north through Irkibai,—the difficult road that was so bravely taken by MacGahan, the correspondent of the *New York Herald*, at the time of the Russian conquest of Khiva. Or, once more, if I wished to return by Orenburg, there was the comparatively easy road taken by the late Captain Burnaby on his ride from Khiva. I infer its comparative ease because

Madame Grotenhielm told me she accomplished it in the depth of winter. It is very common in Asiatic Russia, when a lady or gentleman is travelling alone, to seek for a *poputchik*, or companion, which, among other advantages, halves the expense for the hire of horses. Whether Madame had inquired for a *poputchik* I know not, but she told me that at Kazalinsk, or some preceding station, they had mentioned to her that there was a lady and an English captain, both journeying independently to Petro-Alexandrovsk, and she was asked if she would like a travelling companion. Madame joined the lady; and thus, whilst the English officer, who was none other than the late Captain Burnaby, was doing his "ride to Khiva," these two ladies, unprotected, were accomplishing a similar thing, but travelling in a tarantass drawn by a camel.

This, I was told, must be my method of progression, and the only one possible if I wished to go forward with my tarantass. The distance to Kazalinsk would be 400 miles, taking, at the least, 11 or 12 days, and beyond Kazalinsk was another sandy tract of 180 miles, that must be traversed similarly before coming to a road where horses could speed forward my carriage. Matters, too, just then were made temporarily worse owing to the postal service having broken down through the contractor coming to grief financially. I had heard at Tashkend with what difficulty and expense private horses could be obtained to cover the disorganized portion of the road; and though I had it in my favour that General Chernaieff had recently travelled by the post-road to Tashkend; that the Kirghese would be wandering along the line with their horses to winter quarters; and further, that General Grotenhielm would do all in his power to help me forward,—yet I could not but see that to proceed to Orenburg promised to be a long business.

Besides, I did not wish to return by Orenburg. From the day I left London my heart had been set

upon crossing the Aralo-Caspian desert. Some thought the project for me impossible. Another considered it so dangerous, owing to the uncertainty of the Turkomans, who one day may be amicable, and on the next bloodthirsty, that he strongly counselled me not to venture, even though the authorities at Petro-Alexandrovsk should pronounce it safe. The Governor-General at Tashkend offered no opinion, but said General Grotenhielm would advise me. Meanwhile we heard of two parties of Europeans who, as travellers and without a military escort, had accomplished the journey in safety. The first was a doctor, and an engineer, Russians, with an Armenian clerk, who left Petro-Alexandrovsk in March of the previous year, and crossed by the most direct route, past the well Charishli to Krasnovodsk, the 460 miles needed for this being too great a temptation to them, compared with the longer Kazalinsk route, even though people thought it risky, and called them madmen. An account of their journey was published in the *Petersburg Vedomost*, 23rd March (4th April), 1882. Sevier translated the account for me as we floated down the Oxus; but, from the hills of sand that were mentioned, it seemed clear we could not cross this way in our tarantass. The second party alluded to consisted of Messrs. Capus and Bonvalot, who crossed by the same route six months later.

If, then, two Russians had accomplished the journey and two Frenchmen, why not also two Englishmen? The General thought it safe, and, besides the novelty of the route, it promised not only to save me time, but to take us towards the Caucasus, where I was anxious to see how fared, in the prisons and hospitals, the distribution of Bibles I had set on foot there in 1880, and which I have since learned has been carried out. Another circumstance favourable to my going to the Caspian was that the General was about to despatch his monthly letter to Krasnovodsk, to be forwarded

thence to Askabad, and the man who acted as postman could be my guide. This was opportune, and, all things considered, I decided to go, so that the next question was—by what route? The General could send me, he said, to Kizil Arvat, the Trans-Caspian railway terminus, but, as it was so late in the season, he was not sure whether I might not find, on reaching the other end of the line, that the local steamboat to Krasnovodsk had ceased running, in which case I should have to make a land journey of about 80 miles round the bay, with such convenience for transport of baggage as I could get. As this might detain me several days, I determined not to run the risk, but to go instead by a more northerly route.

These questions, so full of interest to us, were discussed over glasses of hot tea in the Governor's house on the evening of our arrival. In riding costume, with high boots, and all in the rough as we came off our journey, we were not highly presentable objects for a lady's drawing-room; but Madame von Grotenhielm made us welcome, and it was a great treat to me to be able once more to speak direct in French to a European, and not through double interpreters as with the Asiatics. Some of the officers of the garrison came in to spend the evening, and among them was a Captain Gidayat Ullah Hadji Mirbadaleff, a native, who had been taken from Bokhara as a boy; educated, and half-Russianized at Orenburg. He played the violin, accompanied by our hostess at the piano, and whilst my ears were thus entertained, my eyes were feasted with amateur photographs of some of the ruins we had seen in descending the Amu, and others of Kunia Urgenj, the ancient capital of Khiva, through which the General said we should pass.

We slept that night near the Governor's house, in the apartments of Captain Mirbadaleff, and as we had not taken off our clothes since leaving Charjui, I need hardly add that we slept soundly. But what a change

had come over the scene next morning! The windows were frosted, the ground and water frozen, and the fresh wind of yesterday had increased to a gale, and become so cold, that I thought somewhat uneasily what it would be to cross the desert in such weather. This, they said, was the beginning of winter, for which I had better prepare; and so it seemed, for the soldiers were walking in sheepskins, and civilians with their fur collars turned up, and looking the reverse of cheerful. As I had nothing warmer than a Maude shawl, my Ulster being in the tarantass, the General clothed me in a thick officer's overcoat, and in this uniform, after morning tea at his house, took me to see the "lions."

Petro-Alexandrovsk was not ten years old at the date of my visit, but looked as Russian as other towns of its class, forming a great contrast to the crowded houses of the Asiatics. Here was a huge square, big enough for a parade ground, and the domiciles of the few inhabitants were so spread around as to make it quite a journey from one part of the little town to the other. The troops, at the time of my visit, stand in my notes thus: 2 battalions (1,000), 4 sotnias (600), and a battery of artillery (350); but my memory does not serve me as to whether the figures in brackets are comprehensive or distributive. The principal building of the place, on one side of the square, is the fortress, with a somewhat imposing gateway, built upon the site of a house and garden once belonging to an uncle of the Khan of Khiva. A wall surrounds the fort, and within are the Governor's house and public offices, besides officers' quarters. Autumn was too far advanced to leave any beauty in the trees and gardens, in which latter generally, at Petro, the rose is the only flower cultivated. But the last rose of summer had long since disappeared, though one could imagine the trees to afford a grateful shade in the earlier part of the year.

We visited first the hospital, with 80 beds. Each tent of the nomads of the province pays 2s. 6d. yearly, for which the local government provides for the repair of roads and bridges, and a hospital, dispensary, and school. The natives, however, find their children too valuable to spare them from work, so that there were in the Sart school only 15 boys. The girls are not taught at all. Hence only a small proportion of the natives can read. For the Russians at Petro they have a school of two classes, containing 40 scholars.

Besides the foregoing there was in the town a public bath, which we patronized, and, let me not fail to add, a general shop, where we laid in provisions, also a lantern, a pail, and a kettle, for we were now to "do for ourselves" in a very practical sense of the phrase. It was desirable, however, that we should not purchase here such things as we could get in Khiva, because of the trouble of carriage. Shall I add the prices of articles in this out-of-the-way part of the world? Rusks, the staff of life to the desert traveller, cost 1s. per lb., and biscuits 1s. 5d.; candles 20d. Native articles, however, were cheaper; mutton 3d., beef 1½d. to 2d., grapes from 2 to 5 farthings, and butter 2s. per lb. Carrots and potatoes, ¼d. per lb. We thought we should get potatoes at Khiva, but were disappointed. Eggs cost ¼d. each, and cabbages from 10s. to 18s. a hundred. Prices of other things, not in our line, were, 3s. 9d. per yard for camlet for ladies' dresses;* saxaul for fuel, 16 lbs. for 1d.; burnt bricks 30s. to 40s., and dried 4s. to 6s. per 1,000. Monthly wages of women-servants at Petro-Alexandrovsk stood at 14s., and of a coachman £1, each with food; a horse's food costing 14s. a month.

We had been favoured with some private introductions to officers, and amongst others to Captain Kryloff,

* This was the finest material of *bond fide* camel's hair I had seen, and very different from the thick camel's hair-cloth made into a prison garment I bought in Siberia, than which the Baptist could hardly have had anything coarser (Matt. iii. 4).

whom we visited. He would have liked to accompany us across the Aralo-Caspian desert, but he was ill in bed. Another officer, who proved a valuable acquaintance, was Lieutenant-Colonel Pevtzoff, who, at the Governor's request, took great pains in equipping us for our journey, provided a small tent, and lent us a couple of water-barrels. We did not fully understand at the time the value of this arrangement, for we must otherwise have taken water-skins, which are not so desirable. A native, too, was presented to us, one Tailly, who usually undertook the carriage of the Governor's monthly despatch to Krasnovodsk.

On the morning after our arrival we were anxiously looking for Yakoob, but no news came of the tarantass all that day, nor was it till Saturday, the day following, about noon, that it arrived, whereupon I sent my promised presents to the men, by the Centurion and the Mirza, and gave them a letter to the Bek. I had now to become salesman, as hitherto a buyer, and to get rid of my tarantass and two of my horses. I was not very canny in selling the animals, for when a man came to look at them I asked only £6 for the two. He took the better of them, and obligingly told me that I had asked too little. I did better with the tarantass, which had accompanied me for 5,000 miles, for I now sold it for more than half as much again as it cost me. It was cheap, however, even so, to the purchaser at such a distance from the place of manufacture. In fact, I had asked a higher price, and my purchaser, knowing that I must sell, had quietly sent something more than half the sum demanded, saying that I might take the roubles if no one would give more. Being in a corner I was obliged to accept the offer, but it was satisfactory even then to be able to score on the right side.

I had now to make arrangements for the transport of ourselves and baggage across the desert. The Governor kindly interested himself, and arranged with

the man Tailly that he should go forward and hire camels for us. The next need was a native interpreter, for Yakoob's engagement extended only to Petro-Alexandrovsk. Meanwhile he had improved upon acquaintance, and I was anxious that he should go on to Krasnovodsk. Like a wise man, he took time to consider, and sleep upon it, with the result that on the morrow he decided to go as far as Sary-Kamish. For this he was to have at the rate of £4 per month, with everything found, and I promised an additional present. Yakoob bought the remaining horse I had to sell—the vicious Arab, of whom everyone fought shy, for £3, so that our steeds were reduced to the two I had bought at Samarkand for Sevier and myself, and it only remained to pack four arbas, hired at 8s. each, to take our goods before us to Khiva.

On Sunday I asked the Governor's acceptance of 22 New Testaments, and about 100 tracts, the remainder, or thereabouts, of my stock of 5,064 Scriptures and 12,000 other publications, given and sold since leaving Petersburg. I had now been privileged to accomplish my heart's desire in distributing enough copies of the Bible and portions thereof, so that at least one might be placed in every room of each prison and every hospital in Russian Central Asia, the complement to what I had done, three years before, for each prison and hospital in Siberia. I had also left a large number to be distributed to free exiles passing to their remote destinations in the interior. These have been distributed as I wished, and thankfully read on the way, as there is written testimony to show.

I hear that several books have fallen into other, but most suitable, hands. Many of the poorer class of Russians, located near Samara, where living is dear, have lately been migrating with their families into Siberia, far beyond Omsk and Tomsk. They are described to me as all decent, well-behaved people, a great many of them being able to read; and my corre-

spondent says, "It would do one's heart good to see how glad they are of the Bibles, and how carefully they wrap them up." And well they may, for they will perhaps not have the chance of getting more for years to come. The books in quantities for the hospitals and prisons I had to leave with the authorities, and in the case of those who bought I have little to tell, because I was as one deaf and dumb, and I could only hold up the book, and name, or point to, the number of kopecks demanded.

Many will be sceptical, no doubt, as to the ultimate worth of such an undertaking. Its value, however, must not be judged as if it had been done now in England. There was not a Bible depôt in all Turkistan until the year I went there, and the open distribution of tracts, I wot, had never been seen there before. Not that I would seem to forget what has been done in European Russia. As I walked through the Moscow Exhibition I came to a stall whence 300,000 tracts had been distributed in 40 days, and the British and Foreign Bible Society had given 10,000 copies of the Gospels to be similarly distributed there. Again, I was cheered in Ekaterineburg to meet with an agent of the Bible Society, who, in 8 years, had sold 8,079 copies for £238. Telling me of his difficulties in so doing, he said he had sometimes striven to incite inquiry by offering to sell a peasant a New Testament for 10 kopecks, and, when read, to take it back at the same price. But in this he had not always met with success, for so densely ignorant were they, that they preferred to keep the 2½*d.* in their pocket, and forego the reading of the book. So, too, I have mentioned an officer at Tashkend distributing Scriptures among his soldiers.

Fallow ground, therefore, is being broken in various parts of the Empire, and I have heard incidentally from travellers, who have been in Siberia after me, that the books I left are exceedingly valued. The 2,498 Scriptures distributed in Siberia and Central Asia by the

agents of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1881, increased in 1882 sixfold, to 14,638, and of three causes contributing to this, the Committee were good enough to reckon my efforts as one. I am hopeful, therefore, that my labour has not been in vain, and I am still more hopeful of what is to follow, for the experience of all ages has been that those who submit themselves to the teaching of the Bible are elevated, improved, and blessed thereby. I strongly urged upon the Committee, in 1879, the hastening of what they had long been contemplating, namely, the opening of a depôt in Siberia, and, what is better, I have been able to find a Finnish nobleman, who for this purpose was willing to give up his father's home and family, and go into voluntary exile to Irkutsk. A depôt is now opened there; 1,048 copies were sold during the first three weeks, and by the latest report of the Bible Society (for 1883-4) I perceive that Tomsk, Blagovestchensk, Kiakhta, and even Yakutsk are indicated as future centres around which colporteurs may travel with the Word of Life. To have initiated or helped forward such a work, therefore, I count an honour to be remembered through life, and I was thankful for the point attained to at Petro-Alexandrovsk.*

Some weeks after writing the foregoing paragraphs I happened to pick up part of a report of the Bible Society (1882-3), and my eye chanced to fall on the following :—

“ A MAN OF THE WORLD ARRESTED.

“ A worldly man in a good position, but alienated from God, was in Helsingfors on business, when he received a telegram from his wife, saying that his favourite child was dying, and that if he wished to see her alive, he must hasten home. He set off with his heart full of bitterness against God, so much so that he cried out as he sat in the sledge, ‘ Thou mayest take my child, but me Thou shalt never have ! ’

* From the last report I see the circulation from the new Tashkend depôt, for 1883, amounted to 3,202 copies, and for Siberia and Central Asia combined, 10,864 copies, besides the circulation effected in Khiva and Bokhara by colporteurs from the Caspian, as will be mentioned hereafter.

The driver was shocked by his language, and cried, 'Such a blasphemer I never met!' Coming to a station where he had to change horses, while he was inscribing his name in the way-book he observed a copy of the New Testament and Psalms on the table, *one of the books which we (the British and Foreign Bible Society) have helped to place in each inn, station-house, and passenger steamer in Finland.* Almost automatically he opened it, and his eyes fell upon the first verse of the first Psalm, 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,' etc.

"The words fastened on his mind, and he could not drive them from his thoughts. As the horses were not ready, he took a turn in the open air, brooding over the words, and when he came to the next station he read them again in the book he found there, and in order to retain them he copied them on a piece of paper. As he thought about them, he felt that 'the way of transgressors was hard,' and began to realize his sinfulness.

"When he came home he learnt that his dear child was gone. Though overwhelmed with sorrow, he sought the Bible for comfort; there was no copy in the house; and he had to send out to procure one, but in its pages he found consolation. He has not only continued to read it, but he makes it the guide of his life."

The reader will understand my thankful surprise on reading this when I add that the narrator of the story was none other than my friend Miss Alba Hellmann, who put it into my head to go to Siberia; and the words I have italicised represent the distribution of Scriptures in Finland as the outcome of my journey there in 1876. Here, then, is fruit found after many days, and not a few, I am sure, will join in the prayer that it may be so again and again in Asiatic Russia.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

FROM PETRO-ALEXANDROVSK TO KHIVA.

Departure with the Khivan Consul.—Journey to the Oxus and crossing—Arrival at Khanki.—Extraordinary sepulchres.—Our lunch and native food.—The Khivan oasis and its gardens.—Arrival in Khiva at the house of the Divan-beggi.—His antecedents and visit.—Inspection of his premises.—Our visit to the Khan.—Burnaby's "Ride to Khiva."

WE left Petro-Alexandrovsk on Monday morning, October 30th, at 7 o'clock, having broken our fast, not with beefsteaks and coffee as an Englishman would before starting for a 40-mile ride, but on tea and biscuits, which is the usual beginning of a Russian day's eating. The ground and trees were covered with rime. Diotrephes was fresh after three days' rest, and he and I soon agreed upon a gallop. Sevier was ready to follow, but the rest of the party lagged. We were escorted by an old Uzbek whom the General called "the Consul," a djiguitt, and two or three followers, all of them natives. The Consul was a sort of representative of the Khan at Petro-Alexandrovsk, so that when the Russian authorities had any communication to make with his Highness, it was done through this man. The General spoke of him not quite as his lackey, indeed, but he bade me fix the time I would start in the morning, and he would then "tell the Consul to be ready to take me," and so on. Accordingly, when I found my attendants lagging, I sent back to urge them to mend their pace; but the

Consul sent me word that he was a man of importance, and that to hurry would be beneath his dignity. Whereupon I examined him attentively. He was of more than three-score years, dressed in a blue cloth outer khalat, edged with fur, and two khalats beneath, confined by a girdle with an agate clasp, from which were suspended two knives, a hone, and scissors, the last stamped "London." He wore a very tall, black hat, I think of Kara-Kul lambskin, and out of the top peeped a piece of blue cloth. He was mounted on a tall Turkoman horse, whose tapering neck was encircled, like a lady's waist, with silver straps, the bridle also being mounted with silver and with agate. I had, by chance, spoken to Madame von Grotenhielm of this provoking nonsense about grandees riding sedately, and she had told me that her husband, when accompanied by the Consul, rode ahead at his own pace, and left the old man to follow; which, in this case, was all very well, partly because his Excellency knew the road, and next, being Governor, the Consul could give himself no airs.

In my own case I modified the General's plan by riding forward, but frequently turned off the road to look at objects of interest, of which there were plenty in a country where to me almost everything was new. Our route, at starting, lay for 7 miles to the north-west, parallel with the Amu, and about 3 from it. We passed the Cossack cavalry station, and also, a mile after starting, a tower in ruins, a minaret of burnt brick, and adjacent tombs, some of them being partly covered with vegetation, whilst others were simply mounds of clay. On coming opposite to the Khanki ferry we turned to the left at right angles, and, crossing four narrow canals, bore down straight to the river, a good part of the way over land that is submerged in time of flood. On a Russian map I have, 13 versts to the inch, the river's width at the ferry is $2\frac{1}{2}$ versts, and it took us about an hour to cross. We did not

float all the way, but were three times landed on islands that look small in the map, but whose area in each case was sufficiently large to lead me to think, in getting out of the boat, that we had reached the Khivan bank.

When this was really the case we rode across steppe country till 10.45, and then began the fields, or so-called Khiva "gardens"; this word being applicable in the fashion that one speaks in Kent of hop "gardens," only that the Khivan acres are not a tenth so pretty. The ditches round the fields were skirted by willows, djida, and pollard mulberry trees. At 11 we reached Khanki, where Vambéry spent a night in the Kalanter Khane, or quarter for dervishes, and where Captain Burnaby slept in the house of the governor.

As Diotrefes and I, ahead as usual, approached the town we came to a cemetery, and seeing some of the tombs in a very dilapidated condition, I had the curiosity to dismount and peep within, when, to my surprise, I saw two or three skulls and other bones lying on the surface, as if they had never been put beneath the ground. And this I gathered is sometimes the case.

I could hardly believe Yakoob, on his coming up, when first he said this, because in such a hot country it occurred to me that the effluvia of a graveyard would be terrible. But he said that it was so even in Bokhara, where the graveyards do smell offensively in summer. At Samarkand he said the graves are made 6 feet deep, but that at Bokhara, as at Khanki, there is lack of room, and hence the practice alluded to. Moreover, he added that the same vaults are used over again, the bones of the former occupants being pushed into a corner to make way for the new corpse, which might have been the case with the three skulls I saw in one tomb; or, again, it seemed they may have been originally placed there together.*

* May not this illustrate 1 Kings xiii. 31: "When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried: lay my

In this graveyard at Khanki the orders of Josiah could have been easily executed when he "sent and took the bones out of the sepulchres and burned them upon the altar."*

Lunch was prepared for us at Khanki, in a suburban house with farm buildings, and we squatted round a fire on the hearth in the centre of the room. I offered the Consul a glass of my English tea, which won his keenest approbation. They used to get in Khiva Indian tea, but the Russians have practically shut it out of the market by a prohibitive duty. Consequently the natives drink "green tea," as they call it, costing from 3s. to 4s. a pound, or, if they desire better, black Russian "family" tea. The Consul pronounced, however, "Green tea is good; family tea is better; but *that* tea would make one as 'fat as a camel'!" I observed on the hearth a curious pair of tongs, so clumsy that I thought to get the like for a curiosity, and I asked the Consul whether they could

bones beside his bones"; or, again, the hurried thrusting of a corpse into the sepulchre of Elisha (2 Kings xiii. 21)? Evidently it was this kind of sepulture adopted in the case of Lazarus (John xi. 38, 39), and not our fashion of putting beneath the ground; so also in the case of our Lord (John xix. 41; xx. 11).

After a Sart funeral, those collected at the deceased's house listen to the reading of the Koran. The next day the same thing is repeated. The third day, after morning prayer, the mourners go straight from the mosque to the *requiems*, and again listen to recitations from the Koran, and then, having eaten, disperse. Requiems are repeated for 7 or 10 days. On the occasion of yearly festivals the women collect at the grave, and, with wailings and lamentations, call up memories of the departed. Women are paid to do this, and the Muhammadan just alluded to told me they wail so loudly as to make one run away. This appears to agree with the custom obtaining in the time of the Evangelists, of whom Matthew (ix. 23) records, "He saw the minstrels" (I did not hear of these in connection with Central Asian funerals) "and the people making a noise"; and Mark employs a stronger term (v. 38), "them that wept and wailed" (or shouted) "greatly."

Those who assemble at the requiems give alms for the poor and the insane, and the mention thus together of funerals and insanity recalls what they told me at Bokhara, of turning loose the incurably mad. Indeed, one could easily picture neglected lunatics taking refuge in empty sepulchres, like those I saw, and "coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way" (Matt. viii. 28).

* 2 Kings xxiii. 16.

be purchased in Khiva. He said "Yes," or they would make a pair like the English to order ; but I told him I was anxious to take the native article, with a view to improving the English taste ! This joke tickled the fancy of the old fellow, who had already thawed under the influence of tea, and his tongue wagged apace.

They gave us at Khanki some gravy soup, which was thought a delicacy, and, after resting for an hour and a quarter, we resumed our journey under a bright sun, but without sufficient power to melt the rime and thin ice on the ponds. About 5 miles from Khanki we passed the ruins of Nakhaia, a small stronghold ; then, 5 miles beyond, the village Gudja ; and, 3 miles further, another village, Nadubak. For the first hour we had gardens right and left, and then came a patch of unoccupied land, needing water only to make it fruitful, as was apparent from the portions of it enclosed and irrigated, giving a lively picture of garden and desert side by side, with only a wall dividing. In my note-book I have marked the road to Khiva as traversing gardens, desert, and steppe, for we saw some of each though we were supposed to be passing through, a rich country.

I was reminded of the arid character of the soil by my horse making for a water-trough at the side of the road, which was unhappily empty, and we had to go some distance further, not seeing a road-side pool, or stream, till we came to what they called a Sart station, where water was drawn from a well for our animals. We saw cattle in two or three places near the numerous fortified farm-houses, or *havlis*, and, as we drew near to Khiva, met a large number of arbas returning from market. At sunset we came in sight of the city, and beholding, with satisfaction, its towers and minarets standing out against a reddened sky, we entered the gates at half-past 5. They called the distance 60 versts, or 40 miles, but by neither of my maps can I make it more than 50 versts. Captain Burnaby rode



VIEW OF KHIVA WITHIN THE OUTER WALL.

between Khiva and Khanki, a distance he calls 60 (but which should be 30) versts, in 6 hours, so I suppose we had done fairly well in accomplishing 50 versts in 8 hours, excluding rest, and crossing the Oxus. Anyhow, it was the longest day I had spent in the saddle, and I was thoroughly tired.

They conducted us through many streets, nearly empty at dusk, though, of the few inhabitants that were about, some saluted us, and I observed one man, on recognizing the Consul, formally descend from his horse. After winding about a long time we came to the house—or shall I call it palace?—of no less a person than Matmurad, the Divan-beggi, or prime minister of the Khan. We passed through sundry courts and passages, and entered the guest-room, where I fancy Russian embassies are usually lodged. It was less Oriental, but more comfortable, than the rooms we occupied at Bokhara. The windows were glazed, there was a *petchka*, and an iron stove, also a table at which one could sit without having to stoop unduly. On this was a Russian lamp, and in the room two clocks, each bearing false witness against its neighbour, and both being many hours wrong. At one end of the chamber was a divan, and in the opposite wall were indented niches containing sundry Russian confections, coffee, wine and champagne bottles. The last agreed with a whisper I heard at Petro that champagne was not tabooed at the most orthodox court of the Khan, Muhammadan though he be. From this apartment a curtained doorway led to what was to be my bedroom. The walls were papered, and adorned with a mirror and Turkoman carpets, the most noteworthy object in the room being a large bedstead, stretching lengthwise all across the room, with a gateway into it. It must have been a peculiar bed, however, whereon I could not have slept that night, and when I awoke in the morning my limbs had not perfectly recovered from the effect of the previous day's exertion.

Soon after breakfast we received a visit from our old conductor, the Consul, and our host Matmurad, who had thoughtfully spared us a visit immediately on our arrival. This Matmurad, it should be observed, is a man whose name will go down to posterity in the pages of MacGahan and Howorth. At the time of the Russian conquest there was a division of opinion among the Khan's counsellors. Some urged submission, but Matmurad, having headed the militant party, and being very hostile to Russia, was sent a prisoner to Kazalinsk, and thence, as he told us, to Kaluga in Russia, his son Polvan, in his absence, taking his place at court. Subsequently Matmurad was allowed by the conquerors to return, after which he was reinstated as Divan-beggi, "next unto the *Khan*, and great among the *Khivans*, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren." *

Matmurad asked about my health and requirements, and I told him what things I desired, naming among them some photographs, if possible, of Khiva, which I knew some Russians had taken. He replied, however, that there were none to be had. I then invited him to ask me questions, whereupon he inquired whence I came, whither going, and what the object of my journey; further, hearing that I had been round the world, he wished to know which country I liked best. Of course I said England, whereupon he asked if the people in England were good and hospitable. I replied truly, "Not more hospitable than here, but better educated," and as to their being good, I quoted one thing in which England is conspicuous above every nation of the world in that she spends yearly more than half a million of money in carrying the means of improvement and religious enlightenment to the ignorant and heathen parts of the earth. On hearing that I had distributed 50,000 books in Siberia, he asked, "What book?" I then mentioned the Bible, saying that I could give it in

* Esther x. 3.

Persian and Arabic, but that it was not printed in Uzbek.

We were then informed that the Khan would receive us in about four hours, and after that we might go and see the city. I therefore asked to be allowed in the interim to look over our host's premises, which had for us this advantage over those we occupied at Bokhara, that they were not apartments occupied by our noble selves merely, but by a great man's family and servants. They told us there were in the establishment the 4 wives and 5 sons of the Divan-beggi, and 100 men-servants and their wives; but so little did the men-servants (the only ones we saw) know of the women's quarters, that they could not tell how many daughters their master had, or even if there were any. MacGahan says that, at the time of the Russian occupation, Matmurad possessed 400 slaves. Within the high walls surrounding the premises were a garden, several courts, and buildings. The houses were new—in fact, not quite finished—and showed unmistakably that the owner had adopted in captivity many Russian ideas. Matmurad's own chamber was entered through an ante-room, devoid of furniture, and almost of light, with a prettily carved door, said to have cost about £3. In the chamber was a bath, and a hearth, measuring 68 inches by 40, wide enough for a bonfire. There was likewise a table, some books, or portions of the Koran, a harmonicon, and a pair of gloves (the only ones we saw in the khanate), whilst on the wall hung bridles, guns and pistols, many of them presents from the Russians. There was also a bedstead large enough for two persons, a chandelier, presented by the Khan, a huge glass lantern, big enough for a good-sized clock-case, and, as the acme of Khivan refinement, coloured glass for the windows. In the butler's room were birds in cages, musical instruments, and a board for chess, at which they play skilfully. In the mirza's, or secretary's,

room was a Sart *scraipka*, or fiddle, a poor-looking goldfinch, and a hawk in training for hunting wild sheep. In one of the courts was a tent, erected evidently for a permanency, and intended, in its present position, for a Bek and his scribe, though one could see the convenience of such a thing in Khiva, inasmuch as if the Divan-beggi's business called him to travel in the khanate, he would have a habitation to carry with him.

Thus far we had only seen the winter house, but I was more interested in the summer house, not yet completed. It had an upper story, and an outlet on to the roof, where they commonly sit, and lounge and talk. By mounting the roof we could see that the outer walls were tipped, not with broken glass, but with thorns, and the wall of the women's apartments was pointed out, whilst below us was the garden and a pond, with adjacent trees of karagatch, whose dense shade would make the spot cool and agreeable in summer. The karagatch is used for carvings, especially for the two lofty ornamental pillars, which, in palaces and great houses, support the roof of what I must call the portico, covering the wide gallery or platform in front of the principal dwelling-rooms. A block of timber, to make such a pillar, costs in Khiva from £1 to £5. Our host had given £2 for his, and I measured the pedestal 30 inches square, whilst higher the greatest circumference was 6 feet 7 inches.*

* These pillars suggested a *partial* elucidation of the passage in Judges (xvi. 29) concerning Samson's death. Given a man making sport before these pillars, in a position to be seen best from the roof of the portico, and the adjacent portions of the building; then, having been guided to the pillars (ver. 26), he could, sufficient strength being granted, dislocate them quickly one after the other, before bringing down the structure on his own head. This house of the Divan-beggi would be no illustration for the size of the house of Dagon, with the 3,000 men and women stated to be on the flat roof, but it is a question whether this Khivan roof, being covered with people, and the two pillars gone, the whole concern might not collapse. As to the numbers on the roof, I may add that the Jumma mosque, at Khiva, is said to hold from 3,000 to 4,000 people, and as it is covered with a flat roof, so it is to be assumed that as many could assemble thereon.

Besides the summer house of the Divan-beggi, we visited, in a different part of the premises, the house or rooms of his eldest son, and other apartments reserved to another son, a good-looking boy of 15, whose education was not finished, and who showed us one of his copy-books illuminated. Near at hand, tied up in a court, was an enormous ram kept for fighting. He measured 5 feet from the horns to the extremity of his fat tail, 3 feet across the wool on the back, and stood 3 feet high ; but the most interesting part, perhaps, of the premises was the stud yards, a small one for the sons' horses, where they stood in the open, covered with felt from ears to tail, and a larger one for the steeds of the Divan-beggi. Here we saw some good Argamaks, the biggest and strongest of Turkoman horses. One of them cost £17, another £24, and the best, under cover in a stable, £45. The prices of such horses at Petro-Alexandrovsk had been given us as from £15 to £20, and of a cow £3 10s.

After inspecting our host's premises, we were sent for, about half-past 3, to see the Khan. Preceded by the Consul and another, we rode outside the inner wall, receiving here and there a salaam, until we came to the summer palace. The Khan had not yet quitted this building, and a troop of horses were waiting, their riders having gone within, I suppose, on business with the Khan, who, according to Vambéry, holds public audience for at least four hours daily, and is expected to hear the most trivial cases his subjects bring before him. The number of attendants about the building appeared greater than we had seen about the Emir of Bokhara. The Khan's officers were all in sheepskin hats, clothed in somewhat dowdy garments, and presented a poverty-stricken appearance. We were shown into an ante-room, and then through one court after another, till we came to a room, only partially carpeted and scantily furnished, wherein the most prominent object was a sort of divan or bedstead, covered

with a Persian carpet. On this the Khan was sitting, with a sword and revolver before him, and behind were three chairs piled with books. His



SEID MURAD RAHIM, KHAN OF KHIVA.

Majesty shook hands with me, and motioned me to a seat on the couch.

The Khan's age had been given me as 36, but I

should have thought him older. He was dressed in a dark-blue cloth khalat and black sheepskin hat, much like the Consul or any of the others about the court, and he displayed no pretence at grandeur of any sort. He asked whence I came, whether the chief Russian authorities were well, and whether they had been kind and helpful to me; all of which I could answer in the affirmative. Next he asked who was the Sovereign of England, and whether things were going well. I told him Queen Victoria, and repeated the old story about the sun never setting on her dominions, whereupon he told Yakooob privately that he did not believe that; and when he was further informed that the earth went round the sun, his Highness inquired whether it did so straight or upside down, meaning, I suppose, vertically or horizontally. I asked if he had any ancient books or antiquities, but he said that those he once had, the Russians had taken.

Of course I had read Burnaby's "Ride to Khiva," and at Petro-Alexandrovsk had been told that the Khivans sent word of his arrival to the Russians, some of whom remembered the tall life-guardsman being brought to the fortress "a prisoner," as they put it, on his little pony. If this were so, it would seem that the Captain was treated as I had been told I should probably have been at Bokhara, had I come without permission, and this, I suppose, was only in keeping with the Russo-Khivan treaty, which expressly provides that no one is to be allowed to enter the khanate from Russia without a passport.

On reaching Khanki I asked the Consul if he remembered the English Captain, and how it was they gave him up. He did not remember him, and said that for them to give him up to the Russians could not be, for that the Khan was on excellent terms with England, and sent to Herat two years before Khiva was taken, and that the letter was forwarded thence to the English, but no answer was received. I

asked Matmurad if he remembered the Englishman coming, but he said "No." When, however, I told the Khan that the English had been much interested in Khiva by reason of a book written by Captain Burnaby, his Majesty, though not seeming to recollect very clearly, yet inquired if he were still alive, and to what *tchin*, or rank, the Captain had now attained. I told him that of "Colonel."

He then asked what was *my* *tchin*, and was somewhat nonplused when I told him "Doctor of Divinity." He appealed to Matmurad, who was kneeling before him, the only courtier present, and said *that* was a *tchin* he had never heard of before.

Seeing that Yakoob had decided not to go so far as Krasnovodsk, I mentioned to the Khan our desire to find an interpreter who could speak Russian and Turki; and he said he would find a *djiguitt* for us who could act in this capacity and accompany us to Krasnovodsk. Tea had been brought during our conversation for the Khan, Sevier, and me. I had observed that Yakoob, on approaching the Emir, had kissed his Majesty's hand, and so he had done with the Khan; but now he received what in the East is considered a great honour, for the Khan, after drinking a portion of his tea, gave to Yakoob the rest. His Majesty frequently called during our interview for the *chilim*, that was brought by an attendant at a moment's notice, and taken away again after one long whiff had been drawn by his royal master. On the whole, I thought the Khan of Khiva far more intelligent and more interesting than the Emir of Bokhara, and we left his presence with the understanding that, according to Khivan etiquette we were to see him again before quitting the capital.

CHAPTER XXXV.

OUR STAY AT KHIVA.

My informants.—Dimensions of the khanate.—Khivan melons, and efforts to introduce them into England.—Khivan inhabitants, revenue, and foreign relations.—The sights of the town, including the bazaar.—Central Asian weights, measures, and trade.—Cloisonné turquoise jewellery.—Khivan industries.—The medresses of Allah Kuli and Madrahim Khan.—Pehlivan-Ata mosque and its royal tombs.—Moslem pilgrimages.

I WAS greatly favoured, both in Petro-Alexandrovsk and Khiva, in being brought into contact with men such as the Russian Governor, Captain Mirbadaeff, and the Divan-beggi. Both the Captain and Divan-beggi kindly permitted me to put them through my list of questions, so that, thanks to Mr. Sevier's usual patience and theirs, I gained a good deal of information at first hand concerning native life in Central Asian towns, which, after all, is much of one pattern, whether at Samarkand, Bokhara, or Khiva.

Not that I placed much reliance upon Matmurad's judgment in matters of opinion, or anything requiring abstract calculation, for his answer to my first question as to the length of Khiva from north to south showed that he knew nothing about figures. He replied 100 tashes, or 530 miles, which was nearly three times too much. The breadth, including the desert, he gave as from 300 to 400 miles, which was nearer, but the inhabited part west of the Amu as 50 miles. As an illustration how unaccustomed the Khivans are to

tabulating information, I heard at Petro that the Emperor had desired of the Khan certain statistics respecting the khanate, which the latter was willing to supply, but he utterly failed in the attempt. A calculation more to the point was that of the late Major Wood, who estimated the Khivan area, fertilized by the waters of the Oxus, at a million and a half of acres—an area, that is to say, rather less than that of the county of Lincoln, or about half the size of Yorkshire. The soil of the oasis is of loess, or stiff, sandy clay, with strips and patches of sand.

I had expected much in Khivan fruits, especially the melons. They are a most lucrative crop. With good management, Kostenko says, an acre will yield from 10,000 to 14,000 melons. On their winter sorts Matmurad did not appear to set much store, but said that two varieties, ripe at harvest, were sweet as sugar, though they would not keep. My host gave me seeds of five kinds, which, as did Captain Burnaby, I brought to England, hoping that I might be more fortunate than he in raising them. I must say that, after eating Central Asian melons, I have tasted none in England that are by comparison worthy of mention. Those I ate in Constantinople came nearest, and hence, believing that I had real treasures to give, I distributed the seeds to such of my friends and acquaintances as had convenience for growing them.* Apples

* The five kinds were called (1) *Kitai* (or Chinese); (2) *Zamcha*; (3) *Kukcha*, all sown in Khiva in April, and ripen in about two months, or say the beginning of June; whilst the remaining two (4) *Sherin-pitchek*, and (5) *Alikeh*, are ready a week or two later. Mr. J. D. Allcroft sent me the first fruit in 1883, less than a foot long, somewhat pear-shaped, of green flesh, but tasteless, and not juicy—I fear not quite ripe. Earl Stanhope kindly tried some seeds the same season at Chevening. Mr. Gray, the head-gardener, informs me that one plant was raised of such rampant growth that it ran on a trellis over a space of nearly 200 square feet, covering half the roof of the glass house, and then would have spread further if permitted. It was planted early in March in an ordinary loam and leaf soil, with bottom heat. For a long time the blossoms, with one exception, did not set, and that one produced a large ovate melon of 10 lbs. weight. Subsequently other blossoms set, and were growing fruit weighing 3 or 4 lbs. each, when unfortunately

were easily obtained in Khiva, and cost from 24s. to 30s. per cwt., grapes 4s. a batman, or 1d. per lb., and peaches in the season up to half that price. Of mulberries they take so little account as not to pick them for sale. The Khivans cultivate many flowers, they said, but not peas, and neither Matmurad nor the Consul seemed to know what beans were.

the plant gave way through rot at the collar, and died. The plant took quite 5 months to grow. The large melon was cut a little too early, and was lacking in the juicy qualities it probably would have acquired had it been left longer on the plant; but the gardener considered it a good melon. Next year three sorts were tried by Mr. A. F. Barron, of the Royal Horticultural Society's gardens at Chiswick; but he did not report very satisfactorily upon them. Of those he tried, one did not fruit, a second produced two long ovate melons, and the third, round fruit. These ripened, the flesh being tender, very juicy, even watery, but not by any means rich. Mr. Barron adds, "They were rather rampant in growth, and did not fruit readily, but the foliage was somewhat destroyed by the hot sun, and this, no doubt, affected the fruit." Mr. Wildsmith, of Heckfield gardens, near Winchfield (Viscount Eversley's), spoke of the "Alikeh" as best of the three kinds he raised, and not so rampant in growth as the other two, but, though speaking of the "Zamcha" as excellent, thought them no better in quality than English melons. The Zamcha was tried also at Burghley Gardens (the Marquis of Exeter's), by Mr. Gilbert, who is famous, I am told, for growing melons, and he exhibited from my seed a fruit weighing 11½ lbs. at the Royal Horticultural Society's show on September 9th last. Another fruit from the same plant, weighing 9½ lbs., was of green, deep flesh, and though not of very rich or aromatic flavour, was liked for its great juiciness. The appearance of the "Kitai" melon, as reported on from Burghley Gardens, was not flattering, being "precisely like a large vegetable marrow, and of a dark green colour." I sent seeds to my friend Dr. Haughton to be tried in the botanical gardens of Trinity College, Dublin. He committed them to Mr. Burbidge, who distributed some seeds to a few English gardeners, who made melons a speciality. From the correspondence that ensued I learn that Mr. O'Donovan, who penetrated to Merv, thought the introduction of Central Asian melons to Europe so desirable, that he carried some of the seeds in his saddle-bags four or five thousand miles, and spoke of them as of marvellous excellence. Mr. Simpson, of Wortley, grew some of Mr. O'Donovan's melons, but they proved insipid and flavourless, or, at best, just passable. He also tried some of my seeds, of which only one, the Sherin-pitchek, grew, and this he pronounces of the same type as O'Donovan's. Mr. Simpson says, "I gave it a light all to itself, but it was rather straggling and weak from the first, and could not endure the bright sunshine. It lost its foliage, and the single fruit it bore never ripened properly." It was sent, however, to Dr. Haughton, and thought highly of. Dr. Haughton received, too, a Zamcha melon, grown at Lord Eversley's, weighing 4 lbs., of which he subsequently told me that, though familiar with American, as well as British melons, he never in his life ate any

I learnt from Matmurad that in the town of Khiva there are scarcely any Tajiks—only about 15 tradesmen—but that Uzbegs predominate, and the rest are Turkomans and Sarts. They have also a few Jews—less, I believe, than half a dozen—and without a synagogue.

The Khan has no army, and the people are not sharply divided into classes. The mullahs, or priests, and khojas, or descendants of the Prophet, pay no taxes,* and furnish no labourers for canal work, but other subjects have to do so. I imagine, however, that the people must be very poor, for I was told that the raising of the Russian indemnity tries them sorely. The Khan was called upon to pay, at the conquest, for the expenses of the war 2,000,000 roubles, or £200,000, or, in default of immediate payment, to

so fine as this from Khiva. Previously to receiving this information I was becoming dispirited, and thinking that my seeds would turn out no better than those of Captain Burnaby or Mr. O'Donovan. Another trial, however, has been made of the "Alikeh" at Chevening, where the gardener, taught by experience how much space was necessary, planted the melon under a frame with five lights, expecting it to cover the entire area. I saw the plant thus growing on September 5th. It was not so strong, I was told, as that of the previous year, but it had three half-grown fruits of fair size. One of these was sent to me, not quite ripe, on October 13th, which, upon eating ten days later, I was delighted to be able to pronounce quite equal to those I had eaten in Khiva, and far more delicious than anything I have ever tasted in England. This opinion was shared by others with me at the table. This ovate fruit measured 8 inches long, and was green-fleshed, juicy, sweet, and eatable to the skin. Thus I consider that Mr. Gray and Mr. Wildsmith have demonstrated that two kinds at all events of the Khivan melons can be grown in England. The former considers the Alikeh melons require plenty of heat, and a long season, since English melons planted simultaneously with them ripened six weeks before those from Khiva. This, however, will make the latter valuable for late eating, especially as they have such good keeping properties. I hope, therefore, that English gardeners will learn how to grow these fruits. The great size and robustness of the plants may prevent their having fair play in English houses, but I have given seeds also for outdoor growth in Florida, whence the fruit could easily be sent to the London market, so that if, after all, I do not succeed in getting them on English tables, it will not be for lack of endeavour.

* This is the case with the priesthood in Russia, and reminds one of a law promulgated in Persia, touching the priests of the Jews, that "it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom upon them" (Ezra vii. 24).

bring £15,000 a year, and pay interest on the remainder at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum. When I was there he had paid £155,000, so that he was still £45,000 in arrears, besides £20,000 interest; and this so distressed him that I heard his Highness intended, on the ground of poverty, to ask the Emperor for a remission.

The foreign relations of the Khivans, other than with the Russians, are, I take it, exceedingly few. As we approached the city, a djiguitt came alongside, and seemed to be dividing the whole of what was the outer world to him into three categories. He wished to convey to me his dislike of the Russians, which he was obliged to do in very simple language, and partly by signs, whereupon he said, "*Rom yakshi, Inghiliz yakshi, Urus shaitan!*" or something like it, signifying that, "The Turks of Constantinople are good, the English good, but the Russians horrible;" and with that he placed his hand on his sword and then drew his fingers across his gorge, signifying that he would willingly cut their throats. But we heard a different story from a very intelligent Kirghese, who said that the Russians, having taken the country, began by putting on a small tax, and then increased it. Some of his people, not understanding this proceeding, had taken fright, and run away into Bokhara and beyond. When I asked him why they did so, he said, "Because they are fools, and know no better!" and afterwards he said that he considered the Russian intercourse with the Kirghese had been to the advantage of his people. During my interviews with the Khan, his Majesty betrayed great ignorance of foreign countries. He asked which were the greatest powers of the world? Without much time to think, I told him first England, second Germany, third France, fourth Russia, and fifth America; but he thought Russia more powerful, he said, than England.

I said they had a larger army, but we had money to

increase ours; that Russia owed us millions already, and came to us when wanting more.

He said yes, he had heard that England was rich; that English people worked very hard, and were so clever that our mechanics after seeing a thing could make another like it.

I showed him a map of the world, with the English possessions coloured red, which seemed to surprise him; and, as if he thought it our sole vocation in life to annex territory, he inquired what country we should take next, and whether we thought of conquering China. He seemed also to think the Russians were bitten with the same mania, adding that they were never satisfied, but took more and more territory.

Spitzbergen on the map happened to catch his eye, and he asked about that, whereupon I am afraid I puzzled his royal wits, and tested his credulity by telling him that it was dark and light there continuously for periods of eight weeks every year.

On the morning of our third day in Khiva we were taken by the Consul to the sights of the town, and first to the bazaar, the one they seemed proudest of being the *Tim*, or bazaar proper, where is transacted most of the retail business. As it was not Monday or Thursday, which are market days, when we were in the Khiva bazaar, I did not see the place to advantage. I searched for a long time in vain for a pair of warm socks, and at last managed to purchase for a rouble two pairs of coarse worsted foot envelopes, like a pair of night socks, and coming up only to the ankles, and with these I was forced to be content. Dreading, too, the cold we had been warned of, I inquired for a sheepskin *shub*, but could not find one to my taste in the bazaar, so poor was the choice.

Their weights and measures in Khiva appear to be as vague as elsewhere in Central Asia, and to have their own peculiarities, for, whilst the batman in Bokhara equals 320, in Khiva it is only 40, Russian

pounds.* I came to the conclusion there could not be much coinage in Khiva, for when I found that Russian silver money would circulate in the khanate as easily as native coin, I thought it better to get rid of the remainder of my Bokhara tengas, of which I had 550. The equivalent I was to receive was 121 roubles, or £12 2s. (though they had cost me £13 18s.), but it was quite a business to effect the exchange, and when I inquired I found that Yakoob had to go to several merchants, changing a few here and a few there, because no one tradesman had sufficient Russian coin to do the whole transaction.

This put the finishing touch to the low estimate I had formed of the extent of native Central Asian trade. In the Tashkend bazaar one saw here and there a fair stock of goods, but as we travelled on, it was rare to see a native shop in which the stock might not have been bought, one would think down to the very last stick, for a few hundred pounds. I cannot think we saw a single native building throughout Central Asia in which the contents exceeded in value £2,000. I do not remember one that struck me as containing half that value, and we certainly saw no silversmiths' or jewellers' shops that displayed half the stock of an English shop in a small town. I am stating impressions rather than facts, received, it must be remembered, sometimes on other than market-days; but when the stock of three or four dealers had sometimes to be brought to enable us to purchase a few representative specimens of jewellery, one soon found that there was little made ready to hand.

I did purchase certainly one set of jewellery in Central Asia which has been much admired, consisting

* It is noteworthy that the word "batman" is used from the Caspian to Kashgaria, though representing a differing capacity in various places. It possibly has some connection with the Hebrew בַּת (Bath), βάτος (Luke xvi. 10), which was a measure for oil (Luke xvi. 6), and equivalent to the ephah as a measure for corn (Ezek. xlv. 10, 11, 14).

of an Albert chain, locket, and studs of cloisonné turquoise enamel work. I have shown it to Mr. Augustus Franks, at the British Museum, and to the leading art jewellers of Regent Street, and they all called it new to them, and said the like could not be made in London. These things, however, if not ordered, had been made with an eye to Russian demand, and the man told me he was the only maker of them. In fact, the old Biblical custom seemed still to rule, that one takes silver and gold to a smith, as we take cloth to a tailor, whose business it is to make it up.*

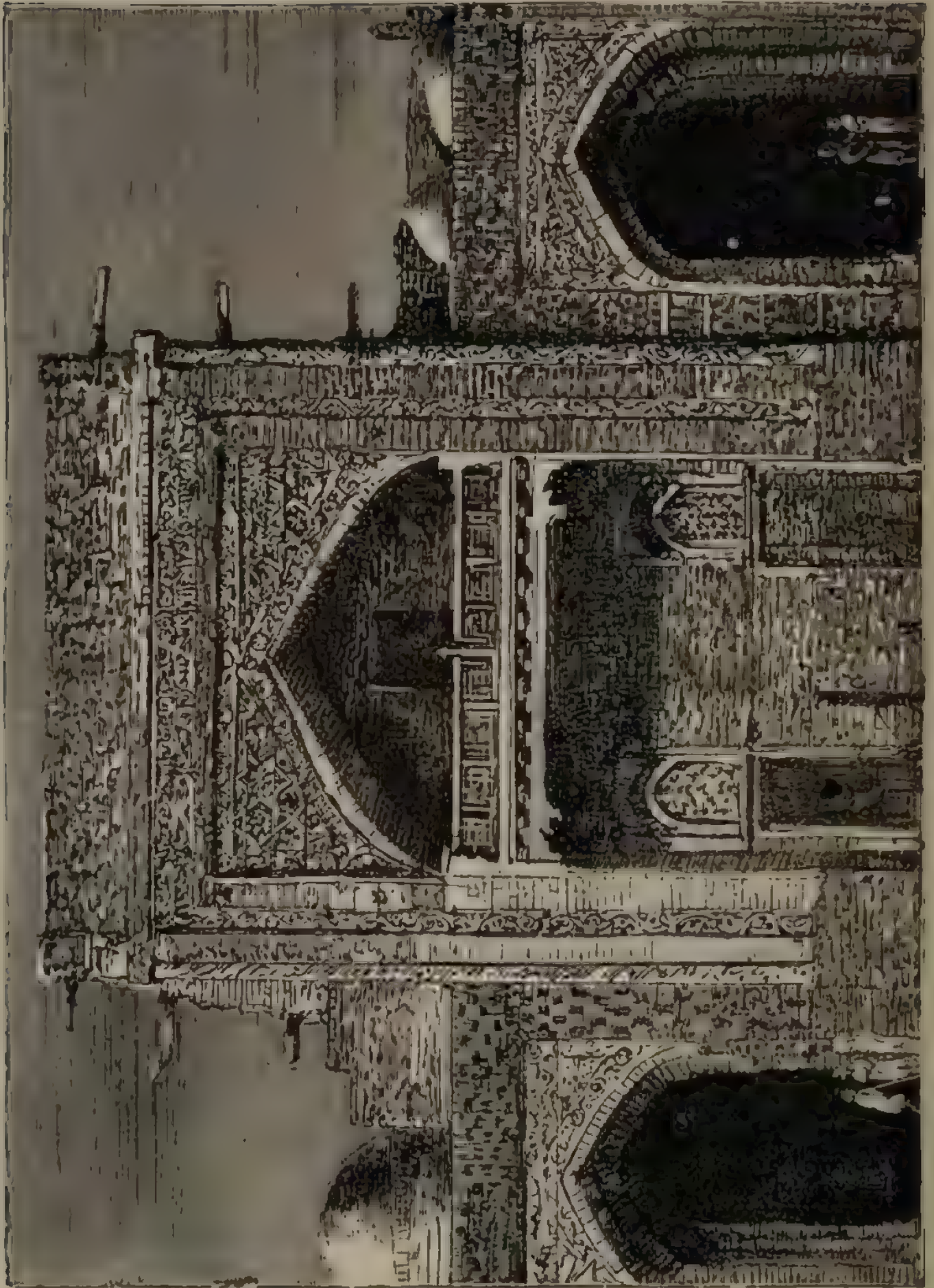
We asked in Khiva to be taken to a silversmith's, and so we were in the strict sense of the word, for there was a workshop with two crucibles of stone to be heated by charcoal fires, two small anvils, and, if I remember rightly, silver in the bar as we had seen at Kuldja, whilst the work the man had in hand was the silvering the handle of a battle-axe, by order of the Khan, to be carried by some new place-man as an insignia of office; but as for getting a collection of Khivan jewellery, it was not apparently there to be had, and I could spend only a shilling for three ear-rings, for the sake of buying something as a souvenir.

I was anxious to form some idea, if possible, of the manufactures of Khiva, and asked to be taken to some of their workshops; but things were at so low an ebb, that in the coppersmiths' row I could not get a kurgan, or ewer, that was worth bringing away. The Divan-beggi subsequently gave me one for his present, which I was well pleased to have as a souvenir of Khiva. It is small, but prettily graven, though not so finely as some of those we saw at Khokand. They took us likewise to what might by compliment be called a silk factory, where, after crawling through a door 3 feet

* "His mother took two hundred shekels of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image" (Judges xvii. 4); and, once more, "They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god" (Isa. xlv. 6).

high, we found a few looms of the roughest description. The Khivan silks, when woven, do not compare well with those of Bokhara and Khokand. I saw them, however, making a thick, red silk, that is sent to Bokhara to be used chiefly for head-dresses of rich Kirghese women. It sells for £1 per Russian pound.

From the caravansary we were taken to see some of the medresses and mosques. MacGahan says there are 22 of the former and 17 of the latter. My notes say "4 large medresses and many small." The medresse of Allah-Kuli was built by the present Khan's father, about 40 years ago. It is of 2 stories, and has 100 students, they said. That of Kutlug Murad Inag has about 100 students. On the square, before the Khan's winter palace, is the Medresse Madrahim, built by the present Khan, with from 60 to 70 students only. Not far distant is the most important medresse in Khiva—that of Muhammad Emin (contracted to Madamin) Khan, which they said was 30 years old. Taken in all, this was about the most complete we had seen, and gave us a fair idea of what many of the medresses in Central Asia must have looked like before they began to fall into ruin. And that is not saying very much; for, to a European eye, they have a dull, unfinished, unfaced look about them that is disappointing. Their photographs flatter them. Several of the Khivan mosques are ornamented with blue and white tiles, interesting, because locally manufactured, but they did not advantageously compare for beauty with those we had seen at Samarkand. This medresse, with 130 cells, has a large quadrangular court, with a well, and is surrounded by cells fitted with hearths, where each student does his cooking—when he has anything, that is, to cook. In one of them I saw a samovar, china teapots, and felts, but for the most part everything looked poverty-stricken. More interesting than this medresse, however, I thought the immense tower without base or capital, which, owing to the death of the

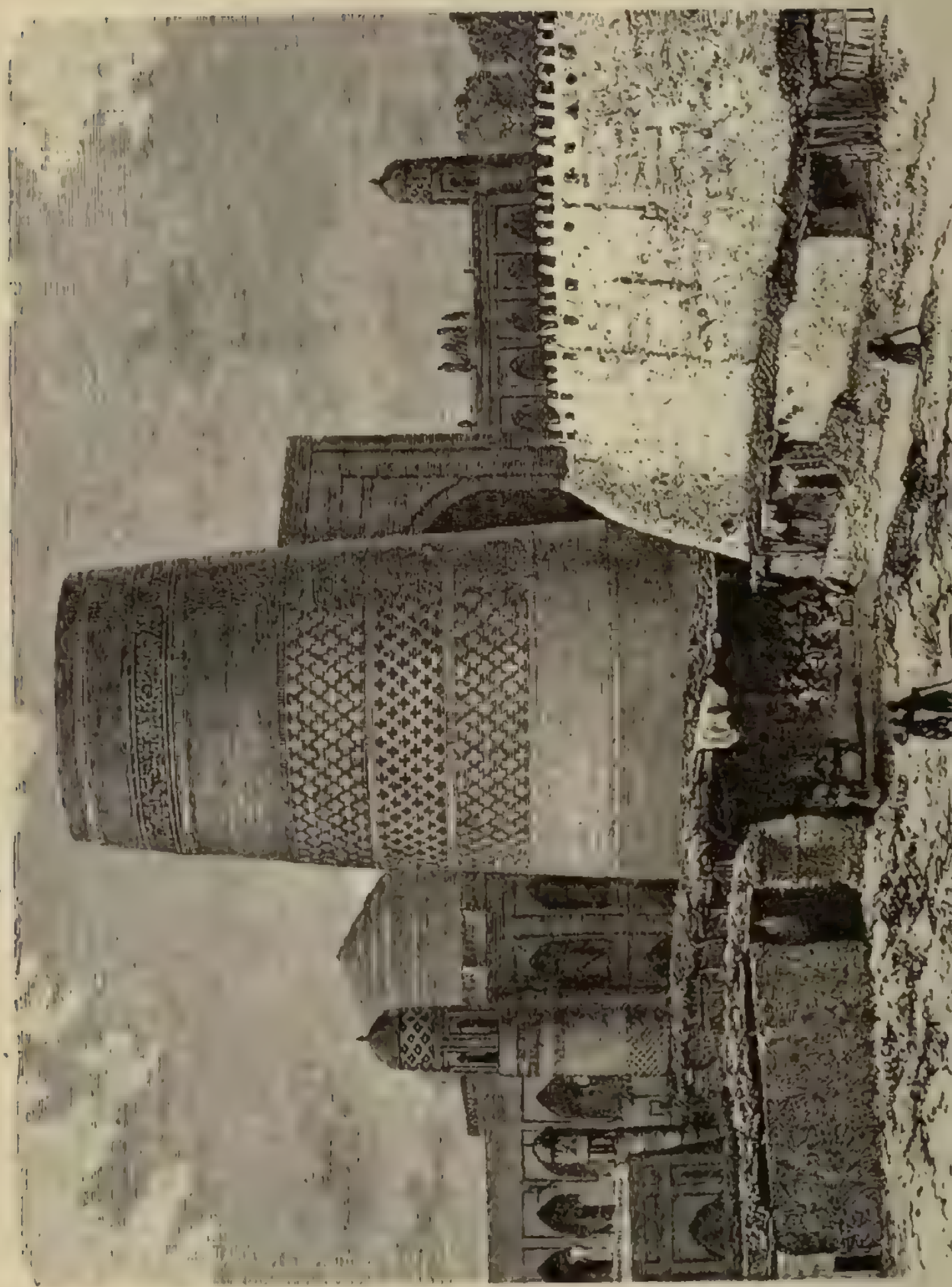


THE MADRESSE MADRAHIM.

builder, Vambéry says, but to the lack of funds, as the people told me, remains incomplete, like the Calton at Edinburgh—memorials of men who "began to build and were not able to finish." The Khivan tower was intended for a minaret, at least twice as high as at present, but even now it is the most prominent architectural object in the town, by reason of its prettily-built texts from the Koran and 10 zones of light and dark blue, green, and brown bricks. I had a great business to measure with my tape its circumference, and found it to be 146 feet, and I also estimated its height to be about the same, and its diameter at the top about 15 feet. This tower and medresse are built of particularly good burnt bricks, which the natives said cost 5*d.* each, meaning thereby, I presume, those coloured.

The one mosque in Khiva that is worthy of notice is the Hazreti Pehlivan-Ata. It has a large dome about 60 feet high, surmounted by a gilt ball, and covered with green tiles, like some of those in the great tower. There are also two small domes. The building is of kiln-burnt brick, and contains the tomb of the Pehlivan Ahmed Zemchi, patron saint of the Khivans. We approached the interior through a darkened passage, where was shown the tomb of Allah Kuli Khan, and though only about 35 years old, it is already decaying. From beneath the cupola we had rather a pretty view of the tiles with which it is lined, adorned with blue tracery, and interwoven with verses from the Koran. This dome, owing to its construction, is said to have peculiar acoustic properties, to which the Khivans attach superstitious importance. There were pointed out to us the tombs of Abul-ghazi Khan and Anusha. Adjoining the apartment under the dome were two side chapels. In one of them is the tomb of Allah-Kuli Khan, and in the other the tomb of Palvan himself.

I am under the impression that this latter is regarded



as particularly sacred and kept locked, but when the door was unfastened, Yakoob, delighted no doubt with the opportunity, went within, and I followed through a cloth-covered door. Within the inner and almost dark chamber was the saint's tomb, but the whole affair looked shabby and dirty; and by the time I had seen this, the information had reached me through my two interpreters that persons were not allowed to go in. Neither at the Shah Zindeh at Samarkand, nor in Khiva, did we come in contact with anything like the crowds that are to be witnessed flocking in Russia to the monasteries of Moscow and Kieff, or in Italy to the holy places of Rome. I am not sure how far this is any indication of the falling-off of Muhammadan zeal, or that it much assists in forming an opinion on the vitality of the Moslem faith in Central Asia; but to this end I shall put together such facts as I have ascertained by inquiry or observation, from which the reader may judge the matter for himself.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

KHIVAN MOSQUES AND THEIR WORSHIPPERS.

Muhammadan religious orders.—Ceremonies of the Jahria Brotherhood.—Superstitious practices.—Dancing dervishes.—Religious condition of Central Asiatics.—Morals of the people.—Fanaticism and indifference.—Their attitude towards the Bible and Christianity.—Importance of missions to Muhammadans.—Efforts of "Orthodox" missionaries.—Labours of the Bible Society.—Khiva seen from a minaret.—The winter palace and *Jumma* mosque.—The prison and gallows.—Home entertainment.—Farewell visit to the Khan.—Hazarasp and its hermit's cave.

I HAVE already spoken of our attendance at the Friday mosque at Bokhara, where I thought we saw Muhammadanism, so to speak, at its best. We saw something of another religious service in the Shah Zindeh, at Samarkand, that was less pleasing, namely, the excited frenzied worship of the Jahria Brotherhood, as Dr. Schuyler calls them, though the word I have in my notes is the sect Nadamat. The proceedings reminded me of the service of the so-called "howling" dervishes I had witnessed at Constantinople. Neither there nor at Samarkand did I see the service begin, and in both cases we came away before the end. Dr. Schuyler has described their worship with his usual thoroughness, which enables me better to recount what I saw. At Samarkand the mosque was well filled with an audience seated on the floor, whilst opposite the entrance, near the *kiblah*, were 11 men, ejaculating prayers with loud cries and violent movements of the body. They utter exclamations, such

as *Hasbi rabi jal Allah!* ("My defence is the Lord, may Allah be magnified!"); *Mo fi kalbi hir Allah* ("There is nothing but God in my heart!"); *Nuri Muhammad sall Allah* ("My light, Muhammad, God bless him!"); *La iloha ill Allah* ("There is no God but Allah!"). These words, or some of them, are chanted to various semi-musical tones, first in a low voice, and accompanied by a movement of the head over the left shoulder towards the heart; then back; then to the right shoulder; and then down, as if directing all the movements to the heart. Sometimes I observed a man, more excited than the rest, shout a sentence, throw out his arms, dance, jump, and then slap his left breast with such force as to make the place ring. These expressions are repeated several hundreds of times, till the devotees get so exhausted, and so hoarse, that their repetitions sound like a succession of groans, and we could see the perspiration running through their clothes. Some were obliged to give up and rest, whilst others were pushed out by the *Ishan*, who was conducting, and who called someone else to fill up gaps in the ranks. When their voices have become entirely hoarse with one cry, another is begun. They sit at first in a row, but later on, as the movement quickens, each puts his hand on his neighbour's shoulders, and they form in a group, as Dr. Schuyler says, "in several concentric rings," but which could remind a native of Blackheath of nothing but a group of players during a "scrimmage" in Rugby football, as they sway from side to side of the mosque, leaping about, jumping up and down, and crying, *Hai! Allah Hai!* like a pack of madmen, till the *Ishan* gives them a rest by reciting a prayer, or a hafiz recites poetry; or, as at Samarkand, a dervish sings a solo in a fervid, trilling voice.

One curious part of the service, as I saw it at Constantinople, was that persons apparently sick were brought to the minister, to be stretched on the floor,

whilst he set his foot on their shoulders, breast, etc. In one case, eight men, women, and children, being laid in a row, side by side, he deliberately planted his elephantine foot on the first, and walked over them all, one woman, I observed, making a terrible grimace as she received his whole weight. After this ordeal they all went up and kissed their benefactor's hand ! Besides this, various garments, and vessels, bottles, etc., were brought to him to breathe his holy breath upon, and thus impart his blessing.*

I saw also at Constantinople the worship of another order, popularly called by foreigners the "dancing" dervishes.†

We did not meet in Central Asia with any such "orderly" dancing, but in the bazaar of Khiva we suddenly came upon a company of dervishes, or *Kalendar*, from Kashgar, who were prancing about the street. These dervishes, like the Nazarites and the Russian priests, suffer no razor to come upon their head. They wear an extinguisher-shaped cap, a sample of which I would gladly have purchased new, but found they were not to be had, for that each made his own ; and to take one second-hand was more than I dared do ! When they saw us strangers they broke

* Can the former of these practices be in any way illustrative of an Oriental procedure, as in Isa. li. 23, "I will put it into the hand of them which have said to thy soul, Bow down that we may go over : and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over" ?

† The square mosque had galleries around, supported by wooden pillars, the centre of the floor being partitioned off for the dancers, 15 in number, of all ages, from boys to "greybeards." They commenced by walking round in single file, and solemnly and sedately saluting their chief and one another. Having completed a triple circumambulation, they stripped themselves of their upper garments, and began to whirl round in their respective orbits with sufficient velocity to cause their kilts, or skirts, to fly out at right angles to their bodies, therein resembling a troupe of stage dancers, their faces the while being turned upwards, and eyes closed in apparent meditation. They kept this up for a long time, music and singing going on meanwhile with 4 flutes, 3 kettledrums, a tambourine, and 7 singers, the last making strange grimaces in straining their voices in Eastern fashion to the loudest.

up their dance, and were for making off, but I called them back to see their performance. They are dressed in rags, and each carries a wallet, and a drinking vessel shaped out of a gourd. They sing sacred songs in Persian and Turki, shouting as loudly as possible, accompanying the singing with boundings, prostrations, and whirling about.* I noticed that one dervish had in his hand two wooden rods about 16 inches long. To these were attached a ring 4 inches in diameter, and on this ring were 12 smaller rings. This was carried in the hand when dancing, and a jingling made therewith. I bought it, and was glad thus to secure a souvenir of these wild-looking devotees.

Having heard so much of the fanaticism of the Muhammadans in Central Asia, I made inquiries, so as to ascertain, if possible, their religious condition and development. Kostenko says that as a people the Sarts cannot be called religious. Even the mullahs and the kazis know but imperfectly the Koran and the *Shariat*. The simple folk do not know the most ordinary prayers. On the ordinances of religion, such as the five periods of prayer, ablutions, and the like, the Sarts look as a weary form. Where the officer has been abolished whose duty it was, and in Bokhara still is, to compel the people with sticks to say their prayers and be religious, there the attendance at the mosques is less than one half what it used to be, and Kostenko does not hesitate to say that hypocrisy alone and hope of gain arouse the Sarts to the outward forms of religion. In a paper by M. Ostroumoff on the characteristics of the Mussulmans in Central Asia, he makes many deductions against them upon too slender premises, I think. His facts, however, if true, are noteworthy,

* Does this possibly afford some illustration of David's "leaping and dancing before the Lord," on account of which Michal, the daughter of Saul, despised him in her heart? (2 Sam. vi. 16; 1 Chron. xv. 29.)

for he represents them as not despising a murderer, and given to gambling, which causes many to rob.

One man, of whom I asked the character of the natives, said : " They are revengeful ; give good words for a favour shown them, but nothing more ; very untruthful, utterly untrustworthy in dealing with Russians, and not much better among themselves ; very dishonest, and trying to cheat wherever they can." To this it is only fair to add an extract I have received within the past day or two from a letter by Dr. Vanorden, an American medical missionary, dated Khiva, Dec. 15th, 1884. He says :—" In my frequent walks through the city I meet with no rudeness, and not unfrequently I receive the salutation '*Salaam alerkum*' from all ages. No weapons are carried. There are no soldiers. If one deviates from the fair way, he is at once reminded that he is a Mussulman and a Turkoman, and not a Kafir, and that it becomes him to be consistent."

As to the fanaticism of the Central Asiatics, I asked the question more than once, " Is Muhammadanism progressing or going back in Central Asia ? " Looking at the tumble-down condition of the medresses and mosques, I should have been rather inclined to think the latter ; but I was reminded that if their temples were not grand, neither were the people's houses. Common opinion went to say that there is now less fanaticism than formerly. One man at Bokhara deemed it stationary. He thought they made converts only occasionally, when a Hindu or Jew condemned to death turned Muhammadan to save his life.

I certainly observed one marked difference between Constantinople and Samarkand. At the former I had to take off my shoes, and be on my best behaviour. In Samarkand we were not asked for a moment to be unshod, and they made no objection to the Russian officer, who was with me, smoking in the precincts just outside the doorway. We had been told by our Jewish

interpreter that if we had seen enough of one part of the ceremony they would go on with the next, and, surely enough, upon the Russian officer intimating that we must be moving, the Ishan did change the form of the service! Dr. Schuyler met with a similar experience in Turkistan, whence he infers that this willingness of Muhammadans to show Christians their rites is not so much a sign of growing liberalism as of indifference.

In passing through the Steppe I sold, as I have said, many New Testaments to the Kirghese, and going through Bokhara I gave an Arabic New Testament, a Persian Bible, or a Turkish Gospel to, I think, every bek whom I met, as well as to the Emir. I asked an intelligent Muhammadan what he thought the natives would do with the books. The Kirghese, he supposed, would simply neglect them, but not destroy them, as he thought would be the case with the mullahs of Khokand and Samarkand. Further, that if the mullahs had known I was coming with such books, though they would have been afraid to offer personal violence, they would most likely have taken measures, he thought, to prevent their distribution. Captain Mirbadaleff said that when, as a boy, he was instructed at Orenburg, there was a Tatar copy of the Scriptures placed within reach of the Muhammadan scholars, but it was hardly read at all.*

I asked the Khan of Khiva to accept a Persian Bible and Arabic New Testament, whereupon he inquired what religion they had in England, and whether, like the Russians, they cross themselves in prayer. I replied that we had no pictures or images for religious use in worship, that we did not cross ourselves, and that our religion was in the Bible I had given him. Did we believe, he asked, that Jesus Christ was a prophet or God's Son? I said "Both," whereupon he

* Perhaps it is not to be expected, since I am told by Mr. Hyde Clarke that the New Testament is of no authority to Muhammadans, being held to be corrupt, whilst the genuine teachings of the prophet Jesus are in the last revelation of the Apostle Muhammad.

said to Yakoob, privately, "That is not true"; but when Yakoob asked whether he should translate that reply, his Highness said "No," and ended by observing that each one had his own religion.

I was keenly interested, of course, as to how the Muhammadans would receive any attempts to convert them to Christianity. I say "of course," because I find it extremely hard to understand the position of those who say, "Leave the Muhammadans alone. Their religion is suitable for *them*. A good Muhammadan compares fairly well with an average Christian. Converts can hardly be made, and, when made, do but follow the example of their Christian masters in eating pork and getting drunk." Now, if this string of objections were true (which it is not), even then I fail to see that a Christian would be released from obedience to the standing orders of his Master to "make disciples of all nations, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15). If one thing be manifest about Christianity, surely it is that it is a proselytizing religion. Its Master was a proselytizer and all His first followers, and I am at a loss to see how any who profess to follow Him can free themselves from so plain a duty.

Russia has no doubt dealt tenderly with the natives of Central Asia in keeping back even her own missionaries, lest to the natives the adoption of the conquerors' religion should seem a matter of compulsion, but this state of things ought not to go on. It is a most hopeful sign in the Russian Church that they are awaking to the duty of sending missionaries to their heathen fellow-subjects; and I was gratified to be asked by one Russian in Tashkend, how the English managed to get a missionary hold of Asiatics, as he would like to do. Another, a German Russian and a Lutheran, was far from satisfied with the little that is being done for the spiritual good of the Muhammadans. He doubted, however, whether the orthodox missionaries

were likely to make much headway among the Moslems, if for no other reason than that their use of pictures in worship is to a Muhammadan an abomination and idolatry.

I was pleased to see, however, from a short notice of Russian missionary work in the *Times* for 4th September, 1884, that at one place a chapel had been built, at the cost of the heathen Kirghese, in which 120 persons had been baptized; and in the government of Tomsk more than 400 Kirghese, chiefly Muhammadans, are reported to have embraced Christianity. Here, then, is a beginning on the part of the Russians, which I pray God may go on and prosper.

Meanwhile the British and Foreign Bible Society has not been idle, as will be seen from its reports for 1883-4. The brothers Bartsch from the Tashkend depôt, on their way to Khokand, sold to the Kirghese 349 copies of the New Testament in 8 days, and I observe that since my visit two colporteurs have made an interesting journey from the Caspian to Khiva, Bokhara, and Charjui. In Khiva they stayed a week, and left it under the impression that the town offers great opportunities for Bible work. Of Bokhara they say, "In this thickly-peopled town even a timid colporteur need not be afraid to work."* In the six months they were away, they sold to the Turkomans, Khivans, Russians, and Bokhariots, 319 copies of the Scriptures, or portions, for 118 roubles. This for a first journey by two unprotected colporteurs into parts where even I, with the Russians at my back, was warned of danger, I think highly creditable to the agents of the Society, and still more so as their travelling expenses, including the hire of camels, amounted to only £27!

* I am informed by the Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, that Dr. Vanorden, writing from Khiva, says:— "The report of your colporteurs as to the quiet of this land I find fully confirmed by my own experiences. It extends even to the animals; for though there are many dogs here, not one barks at the stranger. . . . I am much pleased with the people. It would seem as if they could hardly be Mussulmans, so different are they from others I have met with."

Thus Bokhara and Khiva have been approached from the west by these colporteurs; by myself from the south, and on the east the brothers Bartsch went to Samarkand, and wished to go on to Bokhara; but General Ivanoff, though authorizing them to colport among the Russian troops (to whom they sold 330 copies in 5 days), hesitated to let them go on to Bokhara, without telegraphing first to Petersburg, and finally thought it would be safer for them not to go. It is from this side, however, the khanates will be most conveniently worked.* The opinion of the men from the Caucasus is, that it is very desirable that Bible work should be taken up by colporteurs from the three centres, Khiva, Charjui, and Bokhara; for, say they, a very large proportion of both sexes, young and old, can read, and there is nothing to hinder work among them.†

But to return whence this excursus began. I did not find it so difficult to ascend a minaret in Khiva as in Bokhara. On approaching the Jumma mosque, and seeing its elegant minaret, I expressed a wish at once to go up. They replied at first that the man with the key was absent, which temporary difficulty was overcome by my saying that we would wait till he brought it. We then mounted 90 steps, each about a foot high, and had a capital view of the city. The configuration

* From the latest information, I learn that the brothers Bartsch went on a tour in the summer of 1884 to the North-East (I presume through Vierny), and met with tolerably good success. "But in the neighbourhood of Tashkend the fanaticism of the Muhammadan population, which is easily awakened, has, after the first success, tended greatly to decrease their sales." At Tashkend the Gospel of St. Matthew in Kazan Tatar is finding acceptance, and an agent of the Society, one Jacob Stärkel, is stationed near Petro-Alexandrovska.

† I am glad to notice here the kindness of General Grotenhielm at Petro-Alexandrovska to the men; also of the Governor-General at Askabad, who gave the colporteurs a recommendation to authorities they might possibly meet. His Excellency charged the leader of the caravan to take due care of them, and made him promise to take them safely to Khiva. So, too, in Askabad, a Russian doctor attended gratis one of the men who was ill, wishing, as he said, to befriend a colporteur of the Bible Society.

of the outer wall is that of an oyster-shell with the narrow end elongated and squared.

Below us we could see plainly the winter palace of the Khan near the western gate of the citadel; a large, rambling structure with crenelated mud walls, and having chambers rising above them. On either side of the entrance gateway is a tower, whose top is embellished by coloured bricks, whilst along the cornice of the *façade* is a row of loopholes. In front of the palace is a square, in which we found some brass cannons mounted on carriages with wooden axles, also a mortar, but all of them exceedingly clumsy, whereupon I asked the Consul how, with artillery such as *this*, they could not manage to keep off the Russians? Later on we asked the Khan to be allowed to see his palace. He said that, had we asked before, we should have done so, but that he was on the point of quitting that very afternoon his summer for his winter palace, and consequently we could not go inside. The view of Khiva was no exception to the usual ugliness of an Eastern city as seen from an eminence. We could detect the existence of mosques and medresses by the mud cupolas over them, and we could see well another minaret belonging, I think, to the mosque Seid Bai, almost a facsimile of the one on which we were standing. The big minaret also stood out well, but there were few other buildings sufficiently conspicuous to be worthy of mention. Immediately below us was the flat roof, with two octagonal holes, of the Jumma mosque, where the Khan attends on Fridays, and into which we descended. Anything more bare and ugly as a place of worship it would be hard to conceive, and this was intensified by a forest of upwards of 200 columns or poles, by which the roof was supported.

I had somewhat of a tussle about seeing the prison, for when I asked the Consul to conduct me there, he at first declined, whereupon I spoke loudly, insisted, and asked him to send at once to the Khan for per-



THE WINTER PALACE OF THE KHAN AT KHIVA.

mission. At length they brought us round to one of the city gates, beneath which was an arched room wholly without light, and with a door hardly large enough for Sevier and me to crawl through. We found the prison to be 16 feet long, by $8\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide, and 6 feet high. It had no flooring and no beam for stocks as at Charjui. There were two Kirghese and two other men, prisoners, all secured to one another at the neck by a long chain, and for the moment they were



MINARET OF THE MOSQUE SEID BAI.

sitting outside before a fire. This was the only prison, they said, in Khiva; further, that they made short work with malefactors, and decided their cases quickly. The men appeared to be fed truly "with bread of affliction and with water of affliction,"* and after giving them a trifle we continued our round, passing in the course of the day the gallows.

Having thus spent some hours in looking about the

* 2 Chron. xviii. 26.

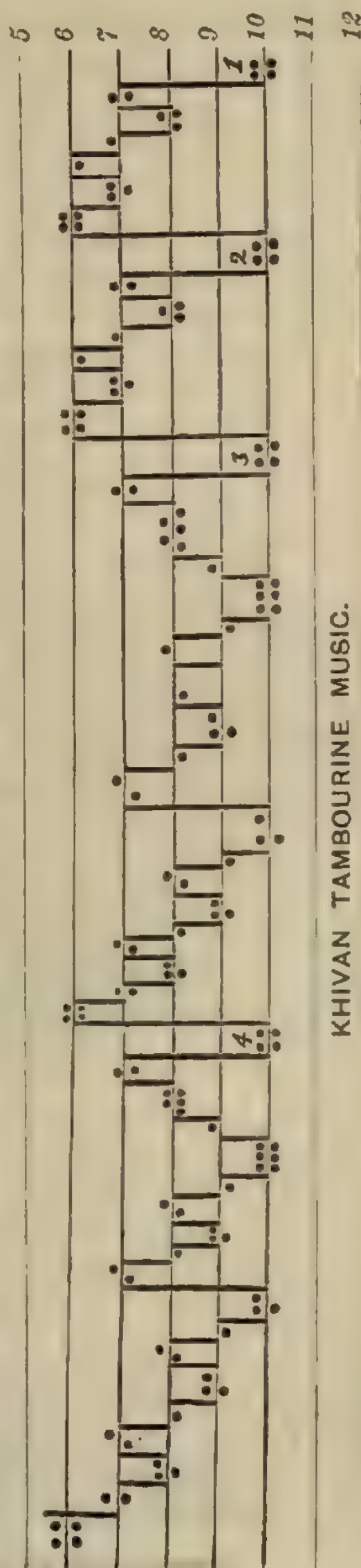
town we returned late to lunch upon the inevitable pilau. On the previous day we had heard a story from the cook's dominions anent this dish that was flattering to our nationality. Among the condiments in the niches in our room was some Russian essence or extract of vinegar, and the cooks thinking, I suppose, to give us something *recherché*, and not knowing the strength of the essence, mixed it freely in the rice, and then discovered that they had spoilt it, whereupon they made some more, but declared that the vinegar must be English, for that the Russians had nothing so strong as that!

We were not called upon for much medical assistance in Khiva. Their chief diseases are fevers and ophthalmia, but they have no leprosy or rishta. Sevier prescribed only for the Divan-beggi, and I think a few of his household, who seemed anxious in every way to make us comfortable.

On our second evening four musicians came to entertain us, one playing a tambour, two others flageolets, and another a tambourine. We had been told by Captain Mirbadaleff to ask Polvan, the son of Matmurad, for a Khivan flute and for written music for the tambourine. The notes he gave me were written on ruled paper, with lines numbered in Arabic up to 19, though the notes extend only between lines 6 and 10. I heard, too, of a stringed instrument called *kishak*, a kind of fiddle. Besides the musicians were provided three batchas, who began their dances with clappers or castanets, but they were not so clever as the boys in Bokhara. They had their hair cut short, and appeared to be from 15 to 17 years old. As usual, a small crowd pressed into the room, and squatted against the wall, Tailly among them, to participate in the fun; but when the Divan-beggi appeared he speedily turned out the majority and sat down with us. I had intimated to him that I should be thankful for an opportunity to ask him questions about the khanate, so that when they had made a noise for a while, and

then asked if I wished for more, I was glad to excuse myself on the ground that I desired conversation with our host. Ugh! said one of the musicians, as if disgusted with our want of appreciation of their talents. After this they speedily left the room, and we fell to—the Consul, Matmurad, Yakoob, Sevier, and I—at such a cross-questioning as I think the natives had not often experienced before.

On our last afternoon in Khiva we went to pay the customary farewell visit to the Khan. He received us as before, and seemed rather inclined to talk politics, which, however, is not my *forte*. He had heard of our war going on in Egypt, and asked whether the affair were cleared up. I had supposed that this war with Muhammadans might have rendered it unsafe for us to travel in Central Asia, but the people seemed to know next to nothing about it, and to care as little. I had heard no news since leaving Samarkand, and not much there, so that I was obliged to explain the situation as best I could. His Highness asked my name and (following in the same interrogative groove as the



KHIVAN TAMBOURINE MUSIC.

Bek in Bokhara) my age, and inquired if we had been well entertained in Khiva. This we were able to answer truly in the affirmative, thanks to the hospitality of his Divan-beggi. Before bidding us farewell, he said that he had directed Matmurad to give us men to take our baggage, and that he had also sent to seek for a Russian-speaking djiguitt to accompany us to Krasnovodsk.

Yakoob, who took up his habitation with the servants, and who had not told them that he spoke Tajik as well as Turki, rather amused us that evening by telling us that there had been a discussion going on outside as to whether it would be proper to give us presents from the Khan. It was at length decided in the affirmative, and there came a horse and cloth khalat for me, a similar khalat for Sevier, and a cotton one for Yakoob. Captain Burnaby was informed, he says, that "a khalat or dressing-gown from the Khan is looked upon at Khiva much as the Order of the Garter would be in England," at which rate I suppose that I, who had received them in Bokhara by dozens, ought to consider myself "very much knighted."

This honour Tailly seemed anxious also to share, for he cunningly left with Yakoob a limited number of roubles to be offered for the two cloth khalats, telling Yakoob that he wished to take them back to Petro-Alexandrovsk, and there to cut a dash, representing that he had received them as a present for the efficiency with which he had served us. Meanwhile he was cheating us to his heart's content. I had given him at Petro-Alexandrovsk 60 roubles, the very top price he thought he should require to hire the best camels. Now, in Khiva, he came to say that he needed 6 roubles more, and put on the most injured expression when I ventured to doubt his veracity, though his story, as will afterwards be seen, was a concoction.

I did not hear much of the character and manner of the life of the Khivan Khan. The Consul could not

tell me how many wives his Majesty had. He had 6 or 7 sons, he said, but of the daughters he knew nothing. General von Grotenhielm told me he had expressed to the Khan a wish to have photographs taken of his wives, and had offered to provide a female operator, but the Khan would not consent. Neither would he agree that one of his sons should be sent to Petersburg to be educated, saying that he loved his



THE HAZARASP GATE AT KHIVA.

children too much to part from them. I think I have read that he has since compromised matters by receiving at Khiva a Russian tutor for his sons.

Whilst talking of Khivan affairs to the Consul, he said he had three wives. I asked if he did not find it exceedingly difficult to manage so many? He looked at the matter, however, in a very practical light. "You see," he said, "I have two houses, one here at Khiva, and the other at Petro-Alexandrovsk, and consequently I have a wife in each, without the trouble of moving her!"

Thus I have described with what fulness I can the city of Khiva, but I must not start northwards without mention of another town in the south, called Hazarasp, approached from Khiva through the gateway of that name—a heavy covered portal 10 feet wide by 20 deep, arched over with brick, and flanked by heavy towers with loopholes. The town to which I refer was considered one of the strongest in the khanate, and has an origin lost in legend.

Its original fortress is said to have been replaced by the present one, about 100 years ago. A part of the wall of the old fortress is said to exist still, and underneath it a *Tchile-Khaneh*, or hermit's cave, wherein those who have entered have been struck dead or dumb; the last man who did so having seen several figures, and received a box on the ears! The entrance to the cell was then blocked up.

The governorship of Hazarasp formerly belonged to the Inak, or oldest member of the Khan's family, who came next in dignity to the sovereign.

I have already mentioned Hanki, Khiva, and Hazarasp, which were regarded as three, and now proceed northwards in the direction of Tashauz, which was considered the fourth, of the strongest fortresses in the Khanate of Khiva.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THROUGH THE KHIVAN KHANATE.

Departure from Khiva with Khassan the Batchman.—Luggage *arbas*.—Kosh-ku-pryk and its melons.—Our stay at Shavat.—Amusements of the natives.—*Havlis* and their supposed resemblance to Scripture “strongholds.”—Visit to *havli* at Manak.—Oil and corn mills.—Hawks for falconry.—Mud walls of the *havli*.—Invitation to stay.—Route to Tashauz.—Stay in the Khan’s palace.—The town of Tashauz.—View from the palace roof.—The Khivan climate.—Arrival at Iliali.—Khivan irrigation.—Our luggage attacked by robbers.—Stay at Ak-tepe.—The Turkoman region.—Accident near Kunia Urgenj.

ON Thursday morning, November 2nd, at 9.45, we said *Aman!* to Matmurad, our Khivan host, and began our ride to Kunia Urgenj, where Taily, having left us on the road, was to meet us again with camels, and start us across the desert. By this means we should pass from the new Kharezmian capital to the old one, and so have seen the principal inhabited points of the khanate. The Consul was setting out to return to Petro-Alexandrovsk, and I confided to him a letter to be forwarded to General Abramoff, informing him that I had now delivered to the Khan the last of his Excellency’s letters; also thanking him for the exceedingly kind reception everywhere afforded me, and assuring him that I should take away with me a most agreeable recollection of my tour through his general government. We were now a party of 7 “regulars,” besides “volunteers” including the Consul and his attendants, who, on leaving the

town, were to turn off to the east, whilst our course was to the north.

We were placed under the charge of Khassan, the old assistant Bek, or more accurately, I think, the batchman, or tax-gatherer, of Kunia Urgenj, and two djiguitts, our luggage having been sent forward by the Khan in 3 *arbas*. There was more reason now, as will presently appear, than when leaving Samarkand, to be afraid of losing our goods, but I had no means of sealing them up; so, to inspire the arba-kesh with some little sense of responsibility, I wrote in my notebook "27 packages," as sent from Khiva, and called



A KHIVAN ARBA.

upon him to affix thereto his sign manual, which he did, "his mark" consisting of a perpendicular stroke, that would, I should think, puzzle any expert in calligraphy to swear to.

I have several times referred to the Central Asian vehicle called an *araba*, or *arba*. Imagine, then, a thick wooden axle, 10 feet long, with 2 wheels attached, not quite so high as the big wheel of the "Flying Dutchman" engine—that is to say, about 7 feet in diameter. On the axle a platform is fixed, of two long beams, the hinder parts being interlaced with willow, whilst the front parts serve as shafts.

These carts are the only wheeled vehicles used by the natives, and are exceedingly clumsy, but they cannot easily be upset, and can go through water 4 feet deep without wetting the load.

Our road lay for the first 8 miles through cultivated land, then crossed 2 miles of steppe with a spur of sand-hills on our right.

At 1 o'clock we reached Kosh-ku-pryk, 11 miles from Khiva, a place marked on the maps as a town, but only a hamlet of less than 20 houses. Here we sat on a platform in the street, in front of a shop, drank tea, and ate bread and melons, taking notice of the dexterous fashion in which the natives cut them up. After the feast, Yakoob asked me for money to pay for it, which, of course, I gave him, though I was still guest of the Khan, as before I had been of the Emir, when everything was found for me. Yakoob told me, however, that had we not paid it was very doubtful whether the refreshment would not have been exacted by the batchman as fruit furnished for the Khan's service. Whilst our horses rested I looked about the village, and in the farmyards, wherein the buildings were commodious, but very rude, the walls being of mud, with timber thrown across for the roof.

By half-past 3 we reached Shavat, our stopping-place for the night, being now 34 versts, or 23 miles, from Khiva, whereas our conductors wanted to make out that we had travelled 6 parsangs, or 48 versts. No one appeared to be expecting us, and the Bek of the place living at a distance, we were lodged in quarters that were a great "come-down" from the mansion of the Divan-beggi. Our dwelling partook of the features of a farm-house and shop combined, and into our miserable room, with black walls, the light entered only through a hole in the roof, which served also as an outlet for smoke. It struck me that it might usually serve for an apartment—or, better said, a prison—for the women. There were two doors, one

leading into a cowshed, and the other on to a shop-platform open to the street, where we drank tea.

As it was fully early, I looked round the town, in this case again consisting of about 12 houses, some with shops, wherein the chief articles of merchandise appeared to be Russian sweetmeats, native tobacco, apples, and melons. One remarkable thing about the place was that the dozen houses had between them at least 6 rams, kept, I presume, for fighting. This development of the "animal" in the natives, and their readiness to see a fight, came out after dark, when our lamp was suddenly run off with, as I supposed the better to part two dogs that were snarling, whereas I found that the object of the depredators was to incite the animals to fight.

In the course of a few hours the Bek of the district appeared, and an evening meal was prepared, of which the grim and public participation in the open street was not particularly agreeable. Here also Russian candles, such as had hitherto been provided by our native hosts, failed us, and there were furnished the ordinary lamps of the country, not "warranted to burn twelve hours," but that needed frequent replenishing.*

We left Shavat next morning at 7.45, and travelled all day through a strip of cultivated land, about 4 miles wide, the soil beyond, on the right, being uncultivated, and, on the left, sandy. We came within sight of very little steppe, but passed numerous walled farm-houses, some, however, being in ruins. After riding 4 miles we passed the village Djagatai. The most striking feature of this part of the country is the manner in which the houses are built. The Daudan,

* Thus reminding one of the folly of the virgins who carried their lamps, but took no oil with them (Matt. xxv. 3). Again, though our blazing fire (for it was cold) and the light and brightness of our feast were little in themselves considered, yet, compared with the blackness of the street beyond, like the streets of Khokand and Bokhara, they helped one to realize the dire simile of being expelled from the brilliancy of a feast, and "cast into outer darkness" (Matt. xxii. 13).

which lay about 2 miles on our left, separates the Uzbeks of the Djagatai and Kipchak tribes to the east from the Yomud Turkomans on the west. As it is impossible for the Uzbeks to depend upon the lengthened quiet behaviour of the Turkomans, the Uzbeks have constructed a line of small fortified buildings, stretching between town and town, wherein the inhabitants can take refuge in case of an attack. Numerous single dwellings are also met with in the fields, and these are provided with towers as well, that are guarded. They are called "*gullah*," Abbott says, and Vambéry calls the farm-houses "*havli*."

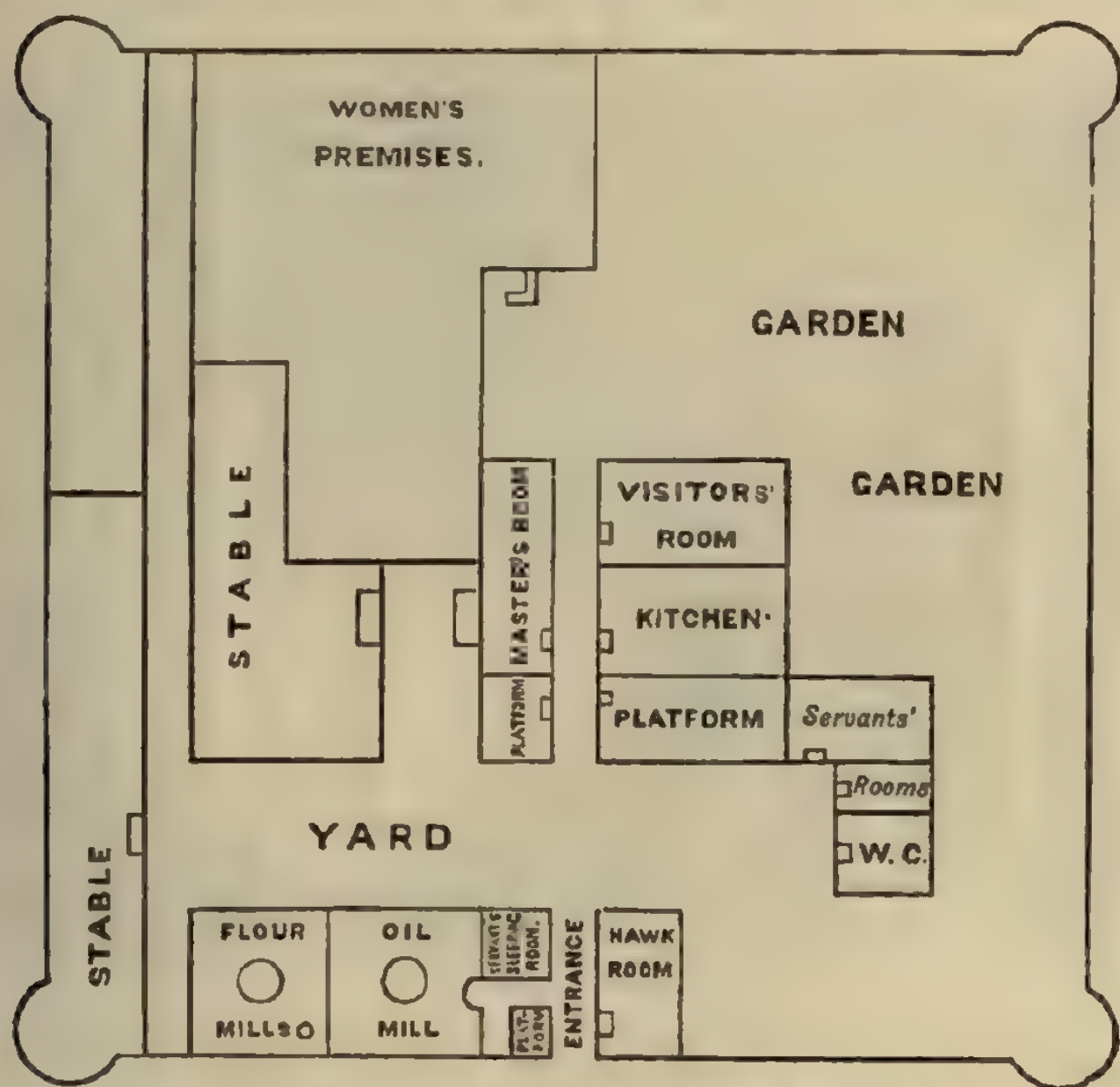
I have alluded before to these miniature fortresses met with all the way from Bokhara, and I was particularly interested in them as illustrating a stage of civilization, such as I should not know where else to find in the present day, but which is brought before us in the early years of the Jewish polity.*

* I have said that the Kirghese Steppe took me back to the days of Abraham, the city of Bokhara to the times of Jewish kings, and now this border land of the Uzbeks reminded one of the days of the Judges, and even earlier; for what the Sabacans were to Job's sons in falling upon their oxen and asses (Job i. 15), and what the Midianites were to the children of Israel when they entered into the land to destroy it (Judges vi. 5), or the Philistines when they robbed the threshing-floors (1 Sam. xxiii. 1), that, I take it, the Turkomans have been to the Uzbeks. Hence the children of Israel "made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and *strongholds*" (Judges vi. 2). David, the wanderer, would, of course, be familiar with such places, for "he abode in the wilderness in strongholds" (1 Sam. xxiii. 14), and hence the comparison he makes after deliverance from Saul, "The Lord is my rock and my fortress . . . my high tower and my refuge" (2 Sam. xxii. 1-3). These similes would appeal more forcibly to an Uzbek than to an Englishman, whilst, as for "the high tower," the best illustration, perhaps, that I know is in the Caucasus, where ruins still show that a family used to build not merely a high tower, but also provide themselves with a movable ladder, which one having ascended quickly on account of robbers, for instance, could pull up after him, and so be safe from his enemy. On the south-west frontier of Turkmenia, the Persians have been living in such dread of the Mervis, that one sees constantly in the fields and gardens small towers entered by a hole just large enough to admit one person at a time. The owner takes refuge there till the departure of the marauders, who do not dare enter, lest the intruder's brains should be battered by a stone. Again, if the word "cities," in 1 Chron. ii. 22, may be understood to mean these

Thus far an opportunity had not offered for me to have a good look at the interior of one of these *havli*, but at half-past 9 we arrived before an excellent specimen, the residence of a rich bek, with whom we were to rest, and our horses be baited. We had made fair speed in coming, thanks to my having had recourse to a new method of interpreting my desires. I had given the batchman to understand that I wished to get on at a good speed, but he seemed sorely oppressed with dignity, and ambled along at a poor pace, whilst I dared not go ahead, not knowing the way. My importunity seemed to lose all its fervour in passing through the brains of two interpreters; so, finding one of the *djiguitts* near me, I bawled out in English, "Go on!" and at the same time laid my whip lustily across his horse's flanks. The *djiguitt* did not understand my language, but his horse did, and I then kept him trotting before me at an improved pace, to show the way, and abundantly soothed his feelings by a gratuity when we reached Manak, as they called the house of the Bek.

I regarded the visit to Manak as an introduction to another grade of Uzbek society. At Bokhara we lived as princes, at Khiva with nobles, in some of the travelling stations with the poor; but now we were guests of one of the "landed aristocracy," who had wives and men-servants, and horses and camels, and oxen and asses; who possessed 150 acres of land here, and 350 more elsewhere, with a yearly harvest fortified farm-houses or the like (and *עָרִים*, according to Gesenius, will perfectly well bear this rendering), it reduces Jair's possessions in the land of Gilead to more reasonable proportions, and renders more intelligible the large number of "cities" referred to in the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, and Judges. Also these *havli* illustrate, perhaps, words in Gen. xxv. 16. These are the sons of Ishmael . . . (whose hand, be it remembered, was to be against every man, and every man's hand against him), by their towns, and by their *castles*. Again, of the Midianites, "they burnt . . . all their goodly *castles*" (Numb. xxxi. 10); and the same idea re-appears in the New Testament, "When a strong man armed keepeth his *palace*, his goods are in peace" (Luke xi. 21).

of 3,000 batmans, or 50 tons, of corn. I was so interested in the man's castle, with its four clay walls 20 feet high, and round bastions at the corners, reminding me forcibly of so many Oriental expressions, that I proceeded to look over the place thoroughly, and afterwards made a rough sketch of its ground plan. Immediately on the left, at the main entrance,



GROUND PLAN OF A "HAVLI" AT MANAK.

was a platform such as we often saw under a city gate, and adjoining this was a sleeping-room for workmen, whilst a passage between led into a chamber with an oil-mill of severely primitive construction.* The mill was made out of the trunk of a tree stood on end, and in the centre a hole, 12 inches across at the

* Reminding one of Job's expression, "which make oil within their walls" (Job xxiv. 11).

top, diminishing below. In this hole was placed a heavy beam made to incline and pound against the side the seed of a plant resembling cotton, called *bang*, with a mixture of flax-seed, for making "kunjut" oil. The machine was turned by a horse blindfolded, and padded here and there, so that, in going round the confined space in which it moved, the animal might not rub or bruise itself against the walls. The traces



A CENTRAL ASIAN CORN-MILL.

were made of a bent branch of a tree. The oil sold, they said, for 4*d.* per lb., and is used alike for burning, cooking, and in making pilau. Oil-cake sells from 3*s.* to 4*s.* per cwt.

Adjoining the oil-mill was a chamber with two flour-mills, the larger, in the centre, to be turned by horse or ass, or, if they were in use, the smaller could be turned by a woman.* In Russian Turkistan, wheat

* Thus illustrating admirably the *μύλος ὄνικος*, or ass mill-stone, "to be hanged about a man's neck" (Matt. xviii. 6; Mark ix. 42), and the

grinding is usually effected by water power on the banks of the aryks, though there are 16 windmills set up at Kazalinsk by Russians. Our host's mill, kept going all day with a horse, would grind 6 cwt.

From the flour-mill we went to a stable, which appeared to run along the whole side of the havli, and then to another building, wherein were only a few horses, donkeys, cows, and a camel; but there was said to be accommodation in the two stables, or sheds, for a hundred cattle. More novel than these last buildings, however, was a room on the right at our entrance, where our host kept some half-dozen hawks. Hunting by means of the falcon, goshawk, and common eagle, is the favourite sport of the natives.

Within the walls of the fortress at Manak was an excellent garden, with rose-bushes, peach and other fruit trees, and standard vines. These, in the absence of leaves, and not looking at them closely, led me to remark to Sevier, "Here at last are filbert-trees," of which, however, we saw none in Central Asia. They told me they make of grapes an intoxicating drink called *zaip*, but that it keeps only six months. Walking round the garden, I looked carefully at the walls. At a height of 3 feet from the ground these measured 3 feet 8 inches in thickness, and in the circular towers, or bastions, at the corners, were little chambers, into which I should imagine it would be easier to dig than penetrate through the other parts of the fortress.* We have not, however, as yet entered

hand mill-stone at which two *women* shall be grinding (Matt. xxiv. 41). Grinding the mill was a menial occupation for a man, and was reserved for slaves and captives. Hence the Philistines made blind Samson do it (Judges xvi. 21). One of Jeremiah's lamentations (v. 13) was, "They took the young men to grind," and Isaiah (xlvi. 2) bids the tender and delicate daughter of Babylon return to her work: "Take the mill-stones and grind meal." I found the custom obtaining in 1879 as far east as the Ussuri, where turning the hand-mill in a Cossack's house was the recognized work of the wife.

* The walls were simply of rammed mud, such as "thieves would dig through (*διὰρύσσουσι*) and steal" (Matt. vi. 19). Ezekiel (viii. 8) was directed to "Dig now in the wall," and Job (xxiv. 16), referring

the owner's residence, which was a house with rooms on either side of a passage, and, adjoining, two rooms for servants. On either side of the passage, at the entrance, was a raised dais or platform, like that at the gateway, only larger, and where I suppose in hot weather much time would be spent. Further in, on the left, was the door of the master's room, and opposite, the door of the kitchen, whilst beyond the kitchen was a room reserved for strangers, called the "guest chamber." Here we were treated to a meal, and the rich bek told us that his fortress cost £120 to build. He invited us to stay for a night; but this I declined for lack of time, and at half-past 11 started again.

Within about a mile of Manak are the ruins of the fortress Uiangen, and two miles further is Ambar,—a mere row of empty stalls, where, as we passed through, they told us a bazaar is held. Beyond this is Tashauz, where we arrived at half-past three, having accomplished since the morning 23 miles.

On arriving at Tashauz we found that the miserable quarters we had left in the morning were to be exchanged for nothing less than a palace at night. The said palace, built in part of brick, was erected by Allah-Kuli Khan, near a pond surrounded with stones, whence the name of the town "Tash-hauz," or "stone pond." Let me hasten to say, however, that we were not cradled in luxury, for the palace, though repaired for a stopping-place by the present Khan when he happens to be passing, is in a ruinous condition.

The town of Tashauz has three gates: the west, south, and palace gate. We were lodged near the last, and the platform at the entrance, for a guard, or for judicial purposes or public business, was very ample. We went out before dinner to see the town. to the lawless and murderer, says, "In the dark they dig through houses, which they have marked for themselves in the day time," a practice no doubt common enough in the wild country through which we were passing.

It has 300 shops and workshops, and one caravansary, admirably suited to persons in search of "cheap lodgings," the rent for a room and shop being $\frac{3}{4}d.$ a day, or $20d.$ per month. This was much cheaper than at Aulie-Ata, where, for a place to sleep and accommodation for horses, was charged $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ per diem. We inquired the price of black Turkoman sheepskin hats, seen elevated on poles above the roof of a house, and were told 8s. each. I had already provided myself with a white one and a sheepskin coat in Khiva, thinking I should find them useful when crossing the desert and spending the night in the open.*

We left Tashauz next morning at 8, the road turning off to the west, and leading still, for the most part, through cultivated land, steppe appearing only here and there. We began to see also ruined houses. The weather had been gradually improving since we left Khiva, where the night before our departure the temperature fell to 33° , the maximum of the previous day being 60° . At Tashauz during the night the minimum was 35° , and I had not ridden far from the town before I found my Ulster too hot, and, after throwing it off, was hardly cool enough. This was pleasanter than the blustering weather we had at Petro-Alexandrovsk, where they had told us that

* As time hung upon our hands, before dark I mounted the roof of the palace, and was reminded again of the early days of the Israelites in Canaan, where the cities they took were "fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; besides unwalled towns a great many" (the two categories into which Central Asian towns may still be divided). (Deut. iii. 5.) The spies accustomed to nomad life might well have said of towns such as Tashauz that they were "great and walled up to heaven" (Deut. i. 28; Num. xiii. 28); and as I looked down from the palace I could see on numbers of the roofs, if not actually stalks of flax (which there may have been), yet of *jugara*, under which Rahab, as easily as possible, could have hidden the spies. There was not a single building outside the walls of Tashauz, and "the time of shutting of the gate when it was dark" would still be a favourable time for escape, since all the population would be shut within. One had only, therefore, to picture Rahab's house adjoining the wall, and her letting visitors down, to escape over the Oxus some 20 miles distant, to recall to the mind some of the acts in a drama with which we had been familiar from childhood (Josh. ii. 5, 6, 15).

sometimes, on the approach of winter, there comes a day or two of cold as a warning, but passes away, to be succeeded by a sort of "St. Luke's little summer."

Our road from Tashauz was enlivened by numbers of Uzbek and Turkoman farmers, going to market to the town we had left. We passed on the road another place called Manak, and Uigur, the ruins of Goklenkala, or fort, and Karamazy, and after riding 19 miles we came at noon to Iliali.

Iliali, or, as the Turkomans call it, "Dschilandy," or "Djingildi," is so named from Hazret Biliali, who is buried here. The Turkomans claim him as their patron saint, and ascribe to his protection sundry of their victories over the Khivans.

The town of Iliali numbers about 160 houses, and a bazaar with 100 shops and workshops. The population is of Sarts, Turkomans, and Persians. Mondays and Thursdays are the market days, and Turkoman corn is the principal merchandise. The fortress, built in its present form about 1865, is in a tumble-down condition, similar to that of many of the houses in the town.

We were taken to a large garden in Iliali, having in the middle a good-sized building, kept, I believe, as a summer house for the Khan when there. It could hardly be called "furnished," for we had no table, and our food was served so primitively that soup was brought without spoons, and meat without knives and forks. To make matters worse, our own table requisites and baggage had not arrived. There was nothing to be done, therefore, but to drink the soup from the basins. This I remedied for the future by providing myself with a folding-knife, etc., in my saddle-bag.

Our slow-going conductors would have been well content that we should have stopped here for the night, but they had rather alarmed me by saying that the next day's journey to Kunia Urgenj was to be a long one, and as the day was only half gone I thought it

much better to push on as far as possible before night, and so shorten the morrow's ride. They said something about the danger of travelling in these parts after dark ; but I gave less heed hereto than was wise, thinking perhaps it might be merely an excuse. After waiting, therefore, till our luggage arbas arrived, we set out again at 2.30, leaving them to follow.

For about 10 miles we passed through gardens ; cultivation then diminished, and the road traversed clayey, and in some parts slightly saline, soil, trees being seen only here and there on the banks of the large aryks. We crossed several canals, one being the Murat Bai, and another the Kasym. This was impressed upon my mind, because we passed one spot where the aryk had overflowed. We had been turned from our path by another such flooded place, like a large lake, on the day we left Khiva, and had to go round its edge. I suppose, in the preceding season, water had been unusually abundant, for we saw houses flooded, in some cases to their destruction, in others not, though the inhabitants were driven out.*

As darkness came on we were still on the steppe, and met several wild-looking men, which brought to

* Bearing in mind that this laborious watering by irrigation was what the Israelites had been accustomed to in Egypt, where they seldom saw rain, they would the more highly appreciate the description set before them of the promised "good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills," "not as the land . . . where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot" (that is, by removing the irrigation ridges and allowing the water to flow in), "but the land . . . drinketh water of the rain of heaven" (Deut. viii. 7 ; xi. 10, 11).

So, again, the floods we passed, and ruined houses suggested, of course, another Scripture resemblance. Judged by the wise and foolish men in the parable (Luke xi. 48), who built their houses upon the rock and earth respectively, the Khivans, with few exceptions, would belong to the latter class, for not only did they seem to me in most cases to build their houses without foundation on the surface, but in a great many cases they placed first a layer of brushwood, and on that they built the wall. I asked the meaning of this feature in Khivan building, and, so far as I could understand, it seemed to be as a remedy against dampness rising in the walls in the time of rain. I perceived, too, in Bokhara waterspouts projecting from the roofs to throw the water clear of the bottom of the walls.

my mind what they had said about danger from robbers. Our little all was entrusted to three men, of whom I knew nothing, who, supposing they were honest, possessed no arms, and, perhaps, not courage enough to defend themselves if they had. These fears were not by any means allayed by the savage aspect of the country we were now traversing, and I was very glad for our personal safety when, at 5.45, we arrived at a group of houses, where we determined to lodge for the night—not that we were expected, however, so that lodgings had to be sought. When found, we were conducted into a Turkoman's shop, where a bright fire was burning, the smoke getting out as best it could through the roof, which had consisted of leafy boughs now blackened, whilst a confined space was cleared for our accommodation, amid sacks of rice, tobacco, firewood, oil, melons, green tea, and butcher's meat.

They called the place Ak-tepe, and wished to make out that we had covered since the morning 72 versts, or nearly 50 miles. There is no such place on the map as Ak-tepe, but according to them we had ridden 32 versts from Iliali, which would give for the day 60 versts, or 40 miles, and this was the most we had yet accomplished between morning and evening. For some hours I was anything but comfortable on account of the non-arrival of our luggage, especially as I had therein my papers, note-books, diary, journal, etc., which I was anxious above all things to save, so that I half determined to carry them in future in my saddle-bags. When at length they did arrive, I found that my fears had not been groundless, for, as the carriers came along, two men, also in arbas, met them and asked, "Where do you come from?"

"From Khiva," they replied; "whence come you?"

"Don't know," said the spokesman. "Where are you going?"

"To Kunia Urgenj," said my man. "And you?"

"I don't know," again he said, and let off his gun.

"What are you shooting at?" said my men. "If you want these goods, you had better come and take them, only remember—they belong to the Russians!"

Whereupon the fellows made off, and my men caught us up at Ak-tepe. I was delighted to hear of their safe arrival, and so thankful that I promised the men an extra present, and determined not to be so venturesome again in pushing on at night.

Notwithstanding our curious lodging, we were too tired not to sleep well, and next morning, at 8.45, we resumed our journey, through a country wilder than anything we had yet seen in Khiva, where even the green of the tamarisk was of a bluish hue, looking as if covered with dust.

The general characteristic of this part of our journey was flatness and desolation, with scarce any water, though there were visible numerous traces of old aryks, showing that the land had formerly been cultivated. The Yomuds, we afterwards learnt, were the inhabitants, amongst whom, a quarter of a century ago, agriculture is said to have been highly developed. They used to get their water from a branch of the Oxus called the Darialyk, which then reached as far as Sary Kamish; but during the war of the Turkomans with Muhammad Amin Khan, the Khivans turned the course of the Darialyk by means of dykes, in order to starve out their turbulent Turkoman neighbours, who were thus compelled to move their settlement, and went off to the Balkan mountains, near the Caspian.

Thus we rode along till we saw, a long way ahead, two lofty minarets and other ruins, which I knew to be those of Kunia (or Old) Urgenj, so called to distinguish it from Yengi (or New) Urgenj, near Khiva. I hurried on to get a good look at them, and was much deceived by finding them so distant. After spending two hours at the ruins, we rode forward a mile or two towards the present town of Kunia Urgenj, the high road passing through a cemetery, where Diotrefes,

having got behind, and being as anxious as usual to go ahead, I was letting him trot, when he so completely misbehaved himself as to stumble and roll. I was pitched several feet over his head, my boots coming easily out of the stirrups, so that providentially I was not in the least hurt, and, before I quite knew what had happened, was on my legs helping up Diotrephes, who looked ashamed of himself. This was something, but Yakoob imported a new sentiment into the affair by observing that it was a judgment on us for galloping on holy ground, where the saints were sleeping. He added that some Muhammadans would have got off their horses and walked, but Yakoob himself did not set the example.

On reaching Kunia Urgenj we were supposed to be about 80 miles from the capital, according to Kuhn, but our conductors had told us 107 miles. A very well mounted messenger can do it in 48 hours, but an ordinary estaphette takes 3 days. We had been occupied three days and a half. Our arbas came soon after our arrival, so that we had simply to wait for Tailly to bring the camels, and pack our goods for the journey across the desert.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

OUR STAY AT KUNIA URGENJ.

Antiquity of Kunia Urgenj.—Siege of Tamerlane.—Inspection of the ruins.—The minarets and mausoleums.—Tombs of Tuirebek Khanim and Sheikh Nejm-ed-din-Kubera.—The town of Hojeili and Mennonite colony.—Our lodgings at Kunia Urgenj.—Central Asian “home life.”—Marriage.—Life in a royal harem.—Seclusion of women.—Need of female missionaries in Central Asia.—Delay in getting camels.—A Kirghese court of justice and witnesses.—Kirghese interpreter.—A new servant.—Need of Kirghese literature.—Preparation for the desert; camel cradles; cooking utensils, and provisions.—Arrival of camels and dishonesty of attendants.—Camels for military purposes.—Presumptive danger ahead.

THE ruins of Kunia Urgenj are of old times. Tamerlane took it from Yusuf Sofi, caused it to be razed in 1388, and the ground sown with barley.* Three years later Timur ordered the city to be rebuilt, and the country peopled afresh; but Urgenj seems never to have gained its former prosperity, though we read that, in 1393, Antonio Pietro de Malliano succeeded Boniface there as bishop.

General von Grotenhielm gave me some photographs, that have done good service for illustrations of the remaining buildings, but he informed me that the ruins awaited the exploration of competent antiquarians.

* Micah (iii. 12) prophesied, “Zion shall be plowed like a field.” Such immense armies as those of Tamerlane and Jinghiz required not a little corn for horses, to say nothing of the needs of the soldiers. The most recent instance I have read of a modern army growing corn for its own nourishment is that of the Chinese, who, a few years since, on their way to Kashgaria to put down the insurrection, stopped their march in Mongolia thus to sow and reap.

In approaching the place we could easily trace for a short distance the old bed of the river, on whose banks the city stood. Sandhills abound, however, and the ancient walls are little more than heaps. We had to make a long circuit before we could enter the city area so as to examine first the westerly of two tall minarets that are left standing. The base of the tower—or rather the bottom, for it has neither base nor capital—was surrounded with broken bricks in such quantities that it was not easy to take the circumference. I found it to be 80 feet, but the whole affair looked so tottering as to be dangerous even to approach it. Here and there on its surface are coloured bricks, but hardly sufficient to indicate its former appearance. The eastern minaret, Kuhn says, is higher than the other. I do not know how he reckons; but I measured the circumference on a level with my head as 114 feet. The diameter on the photograph measures $\frac{7}{16}$ of an inch and the height $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches, which would therefore make its altitude about 186 feet. This minaret is in a better state of preservation than the former. Both are built of baked bricks, and the latter is encircled by four convex rings with inscriptions, the letters of which are said by Glukhovsky to be the height of a man. Kuhn calls them Kufic, which they doubtless are, though Mr. Sevier did not readily allow them to be letters at all, until we purchased some old coins found on the spot, when the similarity of the inscriptions was manifest. It is doubtful whether the inscriptions can now be deciphered, because some of the bricks that form them are fallen out. Besides the inscriptions, the zones of coloured bricks are sometimes in mosaic in the form of a scroll, and at others in broken X patterns. Howorth, quoting Glukhovsky, who visited the place in 1873, speaks of a stately tower or minaret in the shape of a truncated cone, and adds that inside is a winding staircase reaching to the roof, which is quite probable; but, so far as I remember, I could

find no entrance, or I certainly should have been eager to ascend. In my photograph of the eastern minaret, the summit of the western one only just rises above the horizon.

What end these lofty towers served is not clear, unless to call the Muhammadans to prayer. It seems



THE MINARETS OF KUNIA URGENJ.

probable that the two belonged to different medresses, though no traces of the medresses remain.

Besides these minarets there are still standing 5 ruined buildings, once ornamented. Some distance west of the first minaret we examined are some walls and an arch, or *pishtak*, resembling that over the kibleh in a mosque; and this may possibly be the ruins of one of the old palaces of the Kharezmian Shahs. They show signs of having been ornamented with

coloured tiles. A few minutes' walk south-west of the west minaret is the mausoleum of Sheikh Shurif. It has a conical roof of coloured tiles, supported, as Abbott says, upon a prism of 24 sides, not inelegantly moulded into columns and recesses. The only mosaic ornamentation left consists of pale-blue bricks, with raised letters round the cornice of the edifice outside. The door is a pointed arch, and inside I measured the area as 37 feet square. The interior of the dome was so fashioned as to remind me of a scallop shell. The grave of the Sheikh they showed us outside.

Near at hand we entered a tomb my notes call "Kara Lau Baba, built of burnt brick plastered over." This I suppose to be the same as Kuhn calls the mausoleum of Imam Fakhr-ud-din, where again the blue tiles are found only on the cupola. Nearer the east minaret we entered the tomb of Kara Kapa Baba, where was an old man acting apparently the part of showman, and expecting a gratuity. In Central Asia the showmen at the resorts of pilgrims are, I believe, supposed to be descendants of the departed saints, but as to what are the "notes" of Muhammadan sanctity I am not clearly informed.

But the most noteworthy of the mausoleums we visited last, namely, that of Tiurebek or Törebeg Khanim, a daughter of Djanibek Khan. It is circular in form, with a conical roof, having a wide *façade* with pointed arch. I presume it is this that Howorth, quoting Glukhovski, calls "a fine ruined palace, containing a large round hall with a vaulted cupola. The hall has a double row of windows, one about 6 feet from the ground, consisting of four, and the other, near the dome, of 16 windows; and its walls are decorated with reliefs and arabesques, on which are remains of gilding and colour." We found the building of burnt brick on the exterior, with *kashi*, or coloured tiles, inserted here and there, sometimes in the form of a scroll, at others in that of a medallion,

in this ruin was that the enamelled tiles of the cupola were scarcely damaged at all, as had been the case in other buildings we had seen in Central Asia, and this made it possible, whilst confining the attention to the interior of the roof, to imagine the appearance of the finest buildings of Samarkand in their palmy days. I would have given something for the pocket

THE TOMB OF TURKBEK KHANIM.



or, again, triangular. The walls of the interior have once been lined with kashi, but now only the roof retains them, and they told me that men sometimes shoot at the tiles out of reach to make them fall, for the purpose of getting off the gold, which did not sound to me very reasonable. One thing noteworthy

camera promised to have been sent for me to Tashkend, if only to have secured the pattern of the kashi cupola, which was certainly the most complete thing of the kind we had seen. All the figured enamelled bricks were out of reach, or I am afraid my antiquarian instincts would hardly have kept my fingers from picking and stealing. As it was, I mounted the roof to see if anything could be had, but the bricks, which were rather smaller than English, were not only built with great regularity, but were of marvellous strength. I think I may safely say that I *never* examined bricks so hard; and when I remarked this to Khassan, he told me, what will probably tax the reader's belief as it did mine, that they were made, or rather wetted, with camels' milk. I took them to be of Persian manufacture, and they more nearly resembled stone than anything I have ever seen. On the following day, upon offering a reward for a few specimens of the coloured bricks, some were brought, and though these are not of the same clay or, at least, of the same burning, as those used for building simply, I was glad to obtain a few specimens of *kashi* from this ancient town of "the Chorasmian waste." Treasure has been found from time to time among the ruins of Kunia Urgenj, and I was fortunate enough to secure some coins from this place, certain of which Mr. Poole, of the British Museum, tells me he has not seen before.

Between the ruins of Kunia Urgenj and the modern town, on an aryk, stands the mausoleum of Sheikh Nedjm-ud-din Kubera, built in the form of a double mosque. This was erected, according to all accounts, by order of Tamerlane, and if so, it seems likely that, in ordering the rebuilding of the city, he may have directed the two minarets also to be built. The tomb now spoken of was restored by Muhammad Emir Khan. On the *façade* are two lines of inscription—white letters on blue ground. Inside is a pair of tombstones, on which are two parallelograms in mosaic,

signifying that two persons are buried beneath—the Sheikh, and Yalgaiz Khan, son of the Sheikh Jinghiz Khan. In a line with the slab, at the corner, is a small tiled pillar about 2 feet high (reminding one of the like at Tamerlane's own tomb), said to denote where the head lies. A wooden paling encloses the slab and at its head are several flags. On the north side of this building, and touching it, is a mausoleum, wherein lies buried Piriya, the father of Palvan Ata, the patron saint of Khiva. Besides these ruins there are numerous kurgan, and heaps all round Urgenj. Very few are known even by name, though one remarkable thing is that amongst the *débris* are found broken pieces of glass, which Kuhn says is not the case among the ruins in the adjoining Syr-daria province, though found at Samarkand, and suggested as being of Chinese origin.

I have thus entered somewhat fully into particulars concerning this former capital of Khwarezm and its ruins, because they are the most ancient erections I saw in the khanate. Not, however, that Urgenj was always, or first, the capital, for Arabian geographers (quoted in Howorth) give this honour to Kat, the ruins of which have been found on the right bank of the Oxus. Of inhabited points there remains one other which should be noticed in connection with the north of the Oasis—I mean Khojeili.

Some land near Khojeili has been given for a settlement to a body of Christians, called Mennonites, the party of whom we heard first at Aulie Ata, and in whose track we afterwards followed.* They travelled

* Their story, given me in part by one of themselves, is that they are so called from Simon Menno, a Dutch sectary, who died in 1561. In consequence of persecution some of the first Mennonites left Holland for Prussia; and when the Prussians would have forced on them military service, they emigrated to the South of Russia, and settled in the Crimea and on the Volga. In 1874, when conscription became universal in Russia, about a thousand families emigrated at once to the United States and Canada, but the greater part remained in Russia, having been allowed to serve their time, not as soldiers in the army, but as foresters on the crown lands. Some Mennonites of the Volga, however,

in huge European wagons, and when they came to the sands between Karakul and the Amu, we heard that they took the wagons to pieces, and carried them on camels. Sixty-four families floated down the Oxus in 8 boats, which cost for hire £168. Some went by land, and at Petro-Alexandrovsk we heard of them in that their demand for potatoes had sent up the price from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 9d. per cwt.

At Kunia Urgenj we were quartered on the Bek, a son of the old Consul who had conducted us to Khiva. Our room was large and carpeted, with a fire in the centre on a hearth, surrounded by a curb, but there were no chairs or tables. The Bek showed us his own room, in which were felts, a niche to hold a book or two, a kurjun, or pair of saddle-bags, and a double-barrelled gun. There was likewise a room set apart for the Batchman, or Assistant Bek, who had accompanied us. In the stables the best Turkoman horse was valued at £20, and two camels at £10 and £6 each respectively. The house was built throughout of mud, at a cost, he said, of about £50, but that houses so built lasted only about 60 years. I suppose that the Bek had some wives, but not a shadow did

about 150 families, having been carried away by one of their number, who declared he had received orders from on high to proceed eastward, went to Turkistan in 1880 and 1881, and tarried near Tashkend till their destination should be fixed. Schism then divided the camp, some settling at Aulie Ata, but others going on to the Bokhara border, and finally arranging with the Khan of Khiva, who consented to receive them. They are now settled in a small colony on the left bank of the Oxus opposite Fort Nukus; the schismatical party of Aulie Ata, I believe, having joined them.

Their strong point, or prejudice, seemed to be that they would not accept employment of any kind, not even that of a watchman, much less that of a soldier, under any government they consider not Christian. When I asked what government of those existing they considered Christian, my informant said "None!" so that they are tolerably sweeping in their condemnations. At the same time, I observe, they accepted the services of the soldiers sent to protect them by the Emir of Bokhara, whose escort went before them preparing the roads, building bridges, and helping them with food. My informant tells me that they have no ordained priests, but choose ministers among themselves, baptize adults only, and communicate weekly. Some letters respecting these Mennonites appeared in *The Friend* for 1882 and 1883.

we see of one of them; and this reminds me that, though I have introduced the reader to several native houses, I have hardly given a picture of what English people love so much, and call "home life." The simplest way to supply this omission is to say of the natives, "They have none." I must, however, endeavour briefly to sketch what they possess approaching it.

To begin, then, with the marriage union. When a boy reaches the age of 15, his parents seek a wife for him, who, it is preferred, shall be at least 5 years older, so that she may know how to manage his household. Betrothal among the Sarts is usually effected by means of a professional match-maker, who is consulted as to the amount and nature of the *kalim* to be paid, which, besides money, consists of various articles of toilette—robes, beshmets, or under-tunics, ear and finger-rings, kerchiefs, likewise sheep, rice, fruit, etc., for the wedding feast. In Bokhara they said the *kalim* varied according to law from 10 to 1,000 tengas—that is, from 5s. to £25. Of the dowry the bride is to bring with her, the husband knows nothing till after the marriage, though her father, who, according to the prevailing custom, keeps the greater part of the *kalim*, is bound to give his daughter a tent, and an entire set of domestic necessities.

After this point is settled the mullah reads a prayer, and asks the bride through a closed door whether she consents to marry such an one, and, on her assenting, the bridegroom is asked the same. The mullah then hands the bridegroom a cup of water, from which he drinks, and returns it to the mullah, who sends it in to the bride. The remaining water is then drunk by those present. At the close of the ceremony, the women conduct the bridegroom to the sleeping apartment, and also the bride, in whose society the man spends his first three days of married life in the home of her parents.

The bride is then brought to her husband's house, and begins her every-day and stay-at-home existence. She goes into the streets only on business, and seldom makes social visits, except now and then for a funeral or a wedding. When her husband goes out she is commonly locked up. At Petro not many men have two wives, yet if a man be rich, and his first wife chosen by his parents be old (forty is considered *very* old), then he not unfrequently chooses for himself, with the aid of a match-maker, a second and very young wife, who by law, however, in Khiva, must not be less than 11 (in Bokhara they told me 12) years of age.

But these are the darker parts of the picture, it may be said. Supposing there is no divorce, and things go on fairly well, what can then be said for home life in Central Asia? In Bokhara I was told men feed their wives badly, giving them tea and bread in the morning, and tea and peas in the evening, and on bazaar days condescend to eat pilau with them!

One informant represented to me the harem of the Emir as a miserable place, where they get only 5 lbs. of bread a day, and pilau twice a week. Another account, however, from a man who knew a boy, brother of one of the Emir's wives, said that each woman in the harem had a separate house and maid-servant, with 3 meals a day, of her own choice, and the food was said to be good, because the boy in question, being poor, frequently went to see his sister, and was given a meal. The Emir's wives, I was told, might visit, but they had no amusements, unless, perhaps, they played the guitar, "but quietly, so that no one might hear!" I did not infer, from the little I heard of the Emir's affairs, that he cultivated what we should call "family life." We were told in Samarkand that he has two unmarried daughters, whom he visits once a year, but otherwise has no domestic relations with them.

As I have said, it was only in the case of one or two who came to Sevier for medical advice that I saw

a woman's face all through Bokhara and Khiva. I thought, however, that I should like to do so, if only in the case of my hostesses at Khiva, whereupon I cautiously approached the subject to Matmurad. I had already invited him to England, and to this I added, "When you come, the first person to whom you will be introduced, after the gentleman, will be the lady of the house. Moreover, I expected, when I returned, that the English ladies would be curious to know what the Khivan ladies are like. Further, I thought it possible that his Khivan ladies might like to know what the English ladies were like. Would he not, then, do me the pleasure to introduce me to his wife?"

How much these sentences altered their shape in passing through interpreters I know not, but he replied that it would give him pleasure to do so, only that it was contrary to their customs. Moreover, that they were always locked in their chambers, and would be so frightened at the appearance of a stranger that they would drop! And Yakoob afterwards informed me that Matmurad was offended at my asking.

This incident gave me a text on the need of Zenana work and women's labour in the mission field, such as I shall not quickly forget. Here was I with abundance of prestige at my back, a court guest, in the house of a host who seemed desirous to please me in everything. Yet I was refused! How, then, can male missionaries, for educational purposes, gain access to Oriental women? and if they are not reached, how shall the children be influenced to advantage?

But what I could not do, or any other Christian man, a Christian woman can do. And here is a field of usefulness for English ladies, which, thank God, some have nobly commenced, but of which others do not yet realize the importance. England would appear to have a contingent of about 700 women missionaries, representing British societies in the mission field abroad. Has Russia, then, no daughters to send to so

noble a work in Central Asia? Can girls be found, recklessly to throw away their lives in shooting police officers and promoting the horrible "cause" of Nihilism, whilst none offer themselves to minister in womanly sympathy to their Muhammadan sisters—dark, ignorant, and uneducated? Let us hope that, as the Russian Church has formed a Missionary Society for the employment of men, so another may be formed for lady missionaries to the native women!

Soon after our arrival at Kunia Urgenj, on the 5th of November, the postman Taily put in his appearance, but not with camels. He had so easily obtained the money asked on two previous occasions, that he seemed determined, if possible, to exact higher terms. To that end he had fabricated a story I did not believe, and the upshot was that he left us about sunrise on the morning of the 7th, promising to be back in a few hours with our "ships of the desert." But he did not come till night, when it was too late to start, and thus we were compelled by his machinations to spend three or four days at this our last outpost of Khivan civilization. The place, however, was not devoid of interest, and we had several preparations to make. We saw, too, some fresh incidents of native life, better, perhaps, than when in larger places and under more pretentious patronage.

Our host, being Bek, was, of course, chief magistrate in his district, and during our stay there came from a distance two Kirghese of the Adæf tribe for judgment. Captain Mirbadaleff, at Petro-Alexandrovsk, told me that the cases brought before him amongst the Kirghese and Sarts were, for the most part, robberies, murders, and thefts. The Russians leave the *bis* among the Kirghese to administer justice after their own customs. In the court of the Bek of Kunia Urgenj the mode of procedure was simple enough. The litigants squatted on the platform near the door of our apartment, told their tale, and the

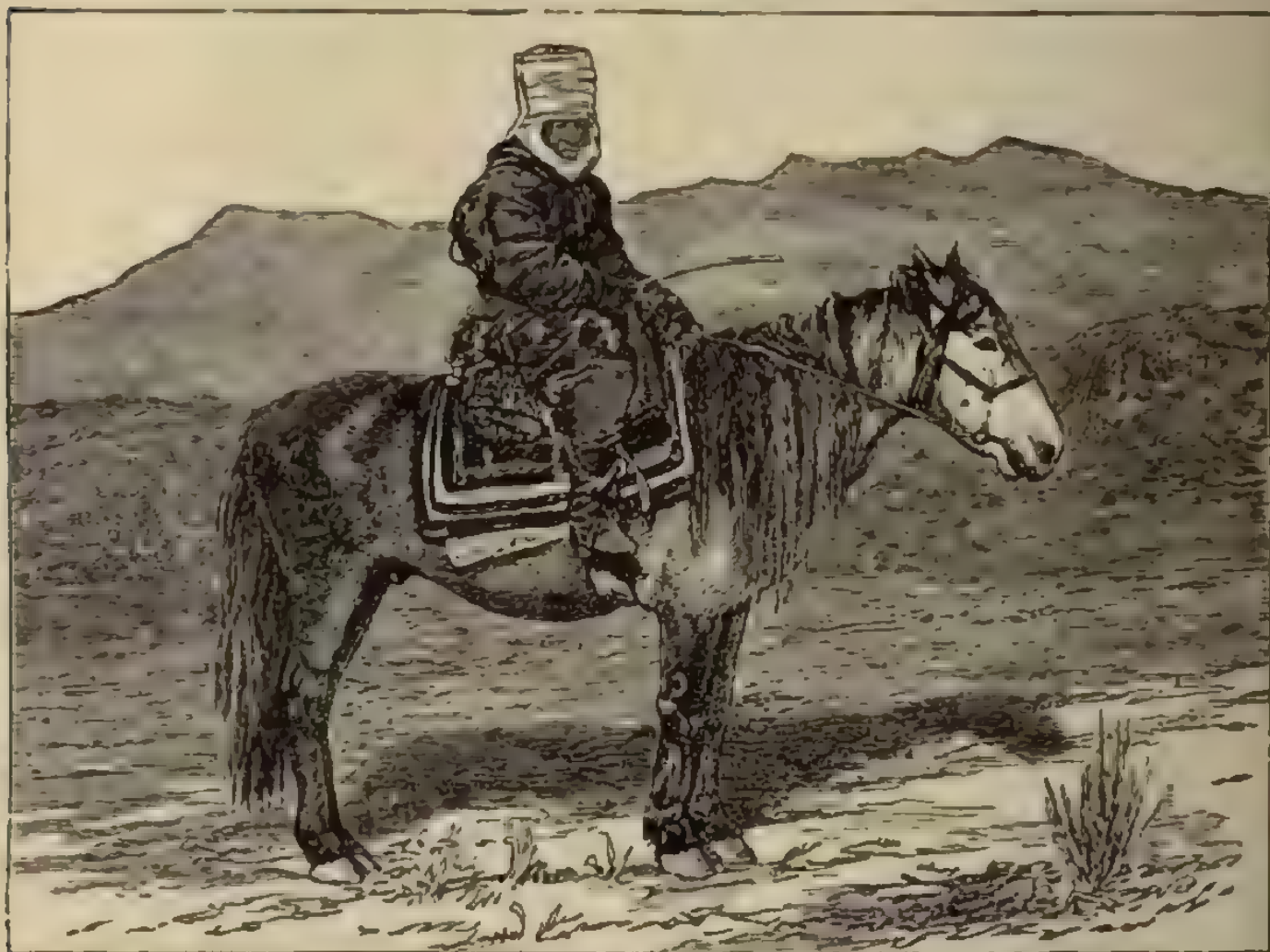
Bek gave judgment. Anything more primitive could not well be; but it was manifest that the judge, being bound by no apparent code, could so easily give unrighteous judgment, that the "glorious uncertainty of the law" was, with the Kirghese, about the only thing certain.*

The prison was not far distant from the Bek's house. I found it "in the gate,"—not a dungeon, however, like those we had visited at Charjui and Khiva, but a good-sized room, in what was, I imagine, the house of the keeper of the gate. There was but one prisoner, and he was quite ready to receive alms, though, by comparison with the imprisoned at Khiva, he was in easy circumstances.

We saw more of these Adæf or Adai Kirghese in the bazaar, perched aloft on their tall camels, and looking the more conspicuous by reason of enormous woolly hats they wear, made in something of the shape of a baby's hood, the flaps covering the

* The autocratic power in the hands of such a judge, and the known corruption of the natives, call to mind "Thy princes. . . . every one loveth gifts and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them" (Isa. i. 23). We had seen one instance wherein a Kirghese widow had preferred to come to a Russian officer with her suit rather than to her own people. The answer she received was one of several incidents that reminded me of the similarity between Russian Central Asia in the present day, and Palestine in New Testament times, in that both had concurrently a law of the people, and a higher law administered by foreigners. Had this woman come to General Kolpakovsky she might have used the language of Paul to Agrippa, "I think myself happy because I shall answer this day before *thee*, because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among us" (Acts xxvi. 2, 3); whilst, on the other hand, the answer she received was near akin to that of Pilate: "Take ye him, and judge him according to *your* law" (John xviii. 31); or of Gallio, "If it be a question of the law you have among yourselves, look ye to it" (Acts xviii. 15). What the officer really answered was, however, more considerate. He said, "Go first to your own court, and, if the decision does not please you, come again to me." Further, the case of the two Adæf Kirghese, travelling together to present themselves to the judge, brought out the meaning of a phrase, I thought, in Matt. v. 25: "Agree with thine adversary quickly, *whiles thou art with him in the way*," lest haply "the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and thou be cast into prison."

shoulders, by no means elegant in appearance, but a great protection from the cold wind of the Steppe. The Kirghese women also come riding into the town astride of horses or oxen. We came into contact here with a very superior young Kirghese, whom the Khan, according to his promise, had bidden offer himself as our interpreter. Meanwhile, as we did not find him on our arrival, we had been looking about for ourselves; for since Yakoob could not be prevailed upon



A KIRGHISE EQUESTRIENNE.

to go further than Sary Kamish, it became clear that we should have to do our own cooking—an art in which I had not graduated. Yakoob, moreover, had found in the bazaar, one Rosy Muhammad, or Mahmet, a poor-looking Sart, with no very definite calling, and sadly in want of cash, who had once been in a party with some Russian surveyors between Khiva and the Caspian. He could speak a little Russian, and said he could cook. He was willing to go with us as

servant for £2 10s. and all found, and to make himself generally useful ; ornamental he could never be, for his eyes were at cross purposes, he was sadly pitted with small-pox, and looked many removes from one of nature's gentlemen. The Russians at Petro-Alexandrovsk had said we should be able to get on without a Turki-speaking interpreter, but I declined the obvious risk ; and our short experience between Pitniak and the Russian fort, where we had left Yakoob in the boat, warned me that there might be many extremely unpleasant little episodes if unable to say so much as " Yes " or " No " with our guides during a fortnight's journey in the wilderness.

I was inclined, therefore, to settle with " Rosy," as we afterwards flatteringly called him, especially as we heard nothing of the interpreter promised by the Khan. Yakoob, however, suggested that we should keep Rosy Mahmet as a reserve, and wait to see if the promised one came, and what he was like. At length, on the afternoon before we started one Jumagala Mataief arrived from Nukus, concerning whom Yakoob came in to report that he feared he was " too great a swell " to do any cooking. Yakoob had also heard him say that he should not think of asking less than £20 for accompanying us to Krasnovodsk !

Accordingly, when the grand man was introduced, he appeared in a cloth tunic, respectably dressed throughout, and carrying a watch, with its silver chain dangling from his breast and shoulders. Almost before we had ascertained his powers of interpretation, we had to ask the ignoble question whether he could cook, to which he replied with the Frenchman, who was asked if he could play the fiddle, that " he had never tried," but he was willing to do so.

He said that he had been engaged for 3 years, winters excepted, as one of five interpreters who accompanied 10 Russian engineers, engaged in surveying

the old bed of the Oxus, with a view to ascertain whether water communication could be again established between the Caspian and the Amu-daria. He had evidently profited by his intercourse with the Russians, and, I should imagine, had proved a faithful servant, for, at the end of his 3 years' service, the principal officer had given him, as a parting reward, the silver watch and chain he now displayed. He appeared, too, to be highly intelligent, and I quite took to him as a man to be depended on; but the cooking difficulty was too serious, as a mere question of health, to be treated lightly.

We thought it better, therefore, to forego this grand interpreter, and be content with Rosy Mahmet, who suddenly increased in value in his own estimation, and asked 20 per cent. more than before, whereupon I clenched matters by writing in my note-book, and bidding him place "his mark" thereto that he agreed to accompany us as servant and interpreter to Krasnovodsk for £3. We then gave Jumagala Mataief a consideration for the time he had lost in coming to us, and he was content to accept that and our thanks, asking, however, my recommendation, if I knew of anyone seeking an interpreter, which I promised.

What I saw and heard from him reminded me of much that M. von Ghern had said of the Kirghese at Vierny respecting the desirability of doing more for their mental elevation. They would appear to have at present no books in their own dialect. The Kirghese New Testament I have spoken of is largely mixed with Tatar, and it seems very desirable that a few simple primers and tracts should be written and translated for them, which, I was told, could probably be done, if someone would bear the expense of printing. Anything written expressly for them would have to be extremely simple, for, of course, the ideas of the natives are very limited, as some of their questions showed, whenever I could get their inquisitiveness sufficiently

aroused to ask any. They inquired how far Petersburg was from London, and whether it was surrounded by water, by steppe, or gardens, which I answered ; but telling them that the latter city had 4,000,000 inhabitants seemed to convey nothing to their minds. The batchman asked also about the comet that was just then visible, and upon my explaining the matter, he said they had always been taught to look upon such things as supernatural, and portending coming events.

The "coming event," however, with us was that we were about to plunge into the desert, where, even under the most favourable circumstances, we might expect to be many days without seeing house or inhabitant, and so be thrown upon our own resources. We had taken from the newspaper account of the Russian doctor and engineer, who had crossed before us, two or three hints, one of them being the desirability of two cradles wherein to sleep at night on the camel's back. They had no such thing at Kunia ready-made, so we had to call in a native carpenter, whom Yakooob, without my desiring it, and quite unnecessarily, beat down in his price, and the consequence was that, though the cradles came in time, they were so badly made that they threatened not to hold together even to the first halting-place.

Next we were informed that, as the purchase of a horse does not include his bridle, so we had to find all things requisite and necessary for loading our camels and keeping the goods from the effects of the weather. Hence I thought it necessary to purchase several large pieces of felt to cover the baggage, lest it should get wet, and two also to lay at the bottom of our tent. These cost 43s. Then came rope in large quantities to tie on the loads, and we were specially advised to take one very long piece, because some of the wells were deep. Our two predecessors had taken corn for their horses, and we were enjoined to take also chopped clover, at which Tailly said the horses would turn up

their noses, for that we should find plenty of grass on the way. We purchased, notwithstanding, two corn sacks, and a third for a dozen melons and water-melons, some of which I judge must have weighed 20 lbs. each, though the sackful cost only 2s.

Next came sundry humble articles, namely, a round, open saucepan, about 18 inches in diameter, and a wooden soup ladle as big as a saucer, 2 nose-bags for the horses, 2 japanned wooden bowls for soup, and a china basin, which last came to a dreadfully tragic end, as will be described hereafter. In Khiva the price of meat had been given us as 3*d.* per lb., beef rather less, and mutton rather more, so of one or the other we took about 20 lbs.; of chicken we added 8, at 4*d.* each. Then came the difficult question of eggs. They used to sell in Khiva at 7 for a halfpenny, but, having advanced to 6 for a penny, we took an economical view of matters, and purchased a limited number only. By way of luxuries we secured 10 pheasants, the price of which, I had better perhaps add, lest I should be deemed extravagant, was 5*d.* each.

These were our viands, but I have yet to add a bag of rice, onions and carrots, a keg of cream, about 50 cakes of native bread taken fresh from the oven, and for dessert, apples and grapes, whilst the batchman gave us for his parting present a nicely-packed little box of large pears. These, with some native salt for cooking purposes, finished our list of eatables purchased in Kunia Urgenj, and to this list must be added candles, wooden spoons, and a teapot.

I was glad to secure in Kunia an addition to my curiosities for the British Museum in the shape of an iron pendent, for a horse-collar, formed of a flat plate with loop and staple for attachment. It corresponds to a horse-bell, and flaps against the wooden collar with a ringing sound. More interesting were some coins found in ruins near Kunia, one of which was said to be "a thousand years old,"—a statement I have

not yet verified. I purchased, too, at Kunia some of the common native lamps of Central Asia, which appeared to be for the most part of one form only.

The purchasing of our provisions took us from time to time to the bazaar, and gave us a peep at the poor and insignificant modern town of Kunia Urgenj. It is surrounded by a wall with three gates. There are about 350 houses, a small bazaar with 100 shops, 6 mosques and 2 schools. This was rather disappointing, for we had been told that we could get all that was necessary for the desert journey at this border town, so that we had deferred some of our purchases.

To our disgust, Tailly did not return all day on Tuesday, so that we spent the greater part of the time in packing, and after we were in bed he arrived with a trumped-up story to the effect that on his way one of the hired camels had stuck in a bog, that they had great difficulty in getting it out, and when they did, it was in so disreputable a condition that he did not like to bring it on, and had consequently purchased another in its stead. This was a tissue of falsehoods. At least, the story we afterwards heard from the camel owner was that he brought 5 camels, as agreed, to Kunia Urgenj, but that Tailly said I would not pay for the fifth, and consequently he sent one back. I knew nothing of this, however, until some days afterwards.

Accordingly, on Wednesday morning, I directed the camels to be loaded, and this was accomplished with no little difficulty. They used the rope so lavishly that I thought we should exhaust all the stores in the town. There was no more to be had new, and the second-hand, according to Yakoob's account, kept rising in price. Unsolicited by us, Rosy told us later on that Yakoob out of this rope had been making a little harvest for himself. I had received a hint at Samarkand that I must look sharp after Yakoob, for that, although he was not a thief, yet he had his own notions of honesty. Yakoob told us that in one

commission we had entrusted to the new interpreter he had overcharged us sufficiently to allow of his purchasing a store of tobacco. For the future, therefore, I sent Yakoob on errands, not thinking that his probable reason for "splitting upon" Rosy was that he might get the business into his own hands.

My costly felts, that I expected would be put over the goods to keep them clean, Tailly coolly folded, and placed beneath the baggage to keep it from rubbing

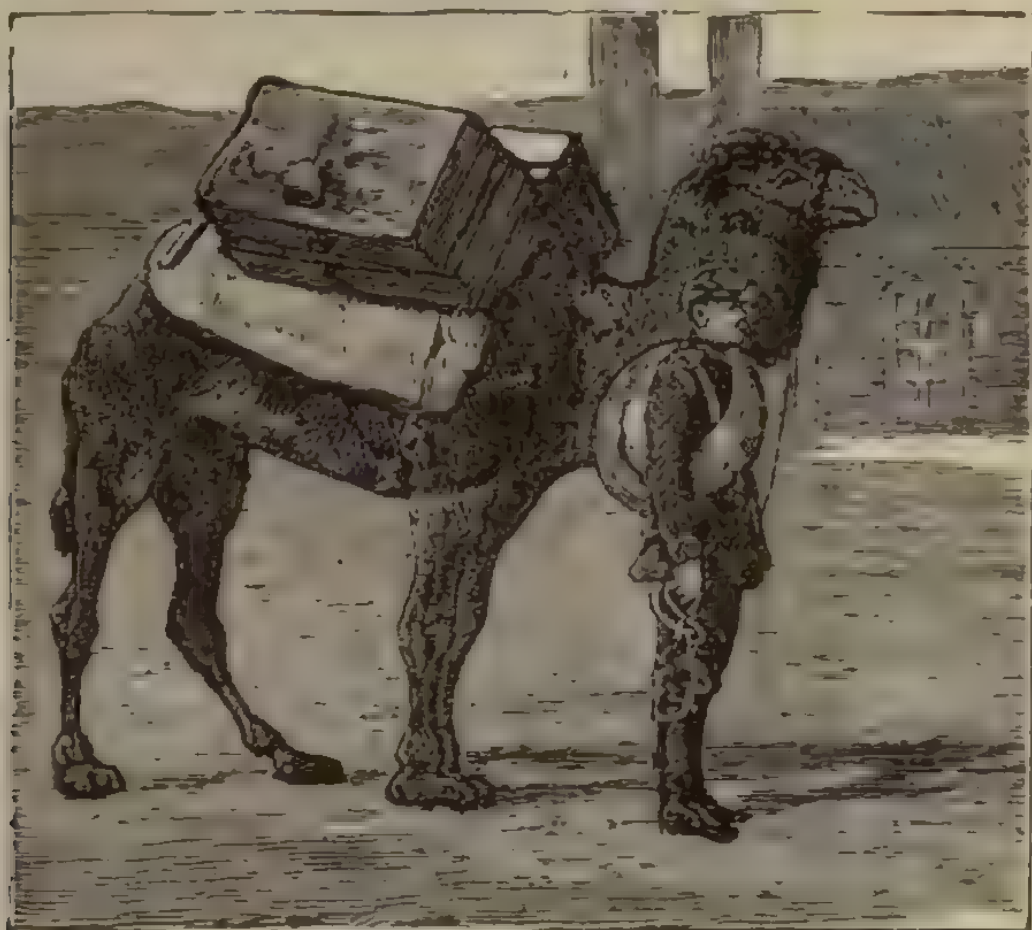


AMBULANCE CART AS DRAWN BY CAMEL IN THE TURKOMAN CAMPAIGNS.

the camels' sides. I rather demurred, thinking that the owner ought to provide that much for his own animals. I urged that I wanted the felts to keep the things from rain. Here no doubt he laughed in his sleeve at my ignorance, as he replied, "We will put them on the top when the rain comes." We did not have a drop all across the desert, and evidently, by Tailly, rain was as little expected as when Samuel called for a storm in harvest.*

* 1 Sam. xii. 17.

I confess to being a little disappointed at the look of the camels hired for us. I had given the best price, that he might secure the best animals, which I supposed to be the graceful, long-haired, two-humped Bactrian camel. Instead of this appeared five short-haired, one-humped, gaunt-looking creatures of anything but attractive appearance. I was reconciled, however, to the new animals on Yakoob's telling me that the one-humped (*nar tuya*) animals are stronger than the two-



CAMEL DRILL IN TURKMENIA.

humped (*tuya*).^{*} Accordingly, when our camels were loaded, our little string of five filed out of the Bek's yard, and I was somewhat amused at this novel fashion of removing my baggage.

I imagine, however, that there was a serious side to the affair, that my ignorance did not permit me to see, but which seemed to be present to the mind of the

^{*} In the campaigns in Turkmenia the Russians have found the camel exceedingly useful for military purposes, not only in bearing burdens, but also in drawing ambulance carts. Mr. P. Lessar informs me that they have also tried the experiment at Krasnovodsk of forming a camel battery.



KRASNOVODSK FORT, WITH A RUSSIAN EXPERIMENT AT A CAMEL BATTERY.

Bek. He had, I presume, never before seen two foreigners, comparatively unarmed, starting with three natives only to cross the Turkoman desert. The Russian surveying parties had been escorted by a guard of Cossacks, and the two private parties I have alluded to did not come so far north as Kunia Urgenj. The Bek, too, knew the dangers of the desert better than I, and sent for a man who offered himself as guide; but this did not seem necessary, I thought, since Tailly was supposed to have made adequate provision on this score, and every individual added to the company rendered necessary the taking also of his provision for nearly three weeks.

What were really the Bek's fears, if he had any, I know not, but it looked rather ominous when, just before starting, he asked me for a written statement that I had in safety left him, and been properly treated. I, therefore, formally wrote, "This is to certify that Dr. Lansdell, having received much kindness and attention from the Bek of Kunia Urgenj, leaves to-day for Krasnovodsk, with Mr. Sevier and Rosy Mahmet as interpreters, and under the guidance of (1) Tailly, (2) Nazar Muhammad, (3) Murad, and (4) Yakoob," and then handing this to the Bek, with a slight touch of the feeling with which I suppose a mariner puts a paper in a bottle for what may, perhaps, be his floating epitaph, I mounted Diotrephe and prepared for the start.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE START FOR THE DESERT.

Departure from Kunia Urgenj.—Rest in a Turkoman tent.—Kibitkas adopted by the Russians.—Yomud Turkomans.—Forced labour of the Khan.—Dismissal of attendants with presents.—New interpreter and guides.—Our last habitation.—Doctoring a Turkoman.—Turkoman women.—“Turning in” to camel cradles.—Rosy’s accident.—My ride through the night.—Wells of Karategin.—First caravan breakfast.—Endeavours to hasten the drivers.—Journey in the old Oxus bed.—The dam of Egin Klych.—Ruins of Mashrek.—Pitching our tent opposite Kunia Vezir.

ON Wednesday morning, November 8th, at half-past 10, we left the city walls in a cavalcade of 14 men. First came three djiguitts, who represented a military escort, and were supposed to be armed, though I forget with what. These, with Tailly and Yakoob, after seeing us well started, were to return on the morrow. Besides, there were a number with us whose presence I did not understand, and also Khassan, the Batchman, and his servant, who were to accompany us as a compliment a short portion of the way. We passed few, if any, gardens, the only cultivated land lying to the right on the banks of the aryk that had been cut to run through the modern Kunia Urgenj. Plunging quickly into the steppe, we again had ruins on either side of the road, as in coming from Iliali, but dating only from half a century ago at most.

When Khassan bade us farewell we took a parting

view of Kunia Urgenj. Its tall minaret was the one reminder we saw in Asia of the spire of an English church, and as it faded away in the distance we said good-bye to fixed habitations for many days. At noon we were taken to the tent of one who was said to be a "rich" Turkoman, where they brought forth melons for lunch, and by half-past 4 we arrived at an *oba* or collection of Yomud Turkoman tents,* in one of which we were to take up our quarters for the night,



A TURKOMAN KIBITKA, AS UTILIZED BY THE RUSSIANS IN TURKMENIA.

or, as Yakoob put it in New Testament language, "till the cock crew." †

* I noticed that the reed-matting the Kirghese place round the tent inside, the Turkomans placed outside. The Russians have adopted these kибitkas with great comfort for military purposes in campaigning in Turkmenia.

† Matt. xxvi. 34. This was not the only answer I received in Central Asia characteristic of a people who have not clocks and watches, or even sun-dials so far as I saw, and who, consequently, do not practically divide their day into hours and minutes. One morning I stirred up Yakoob before it was light, whereupon he murmured, "Why, the mullah hasn't called," meaning the call to sunrise prayer. Again, as Nehemiah's men worked "from the rising of the morning till the stars

In unloading the camels one of the cradles went hopelessly to pieces, but fortunately we found another among the Turkomans. Yakoob came to inquire whether he should cook some of the butcher's meat for a feast to my retinue. I replied "Certainly," but was hardly prepared for their making off with little



YOMUD TURKOMANS.

short of three-fourths of our stock. A tent, belonging apparently to an old Yomud, who shifted elsewhere for

appeared" (iv. 21), so, in the desert, one weary eve I asked the camel driver how soon we should arrive at the next well, and instead of saying in so many hours, he pointed to the evening star, and intimated when that should have sunk to a certain part of the heavens, we should be there.

the night, was set apart for Sevier and me; Tailly and Rosy paying us visits to settle sundry minor affairs. We had a fire burning, and a piece of green wood was sputtering out sap, which I observed Tailly take with his finger and rub on his eyelids, for the purpose, he said, of "improving his sight."



NOMAD TURKOMANS.

Next morning we were astir at dawn, and after drinking tea I pleased our old host by presenting him with 8s. for our night's lodging. He fairly danced with delight, and vowed that "the Russians," as he called us, were excellent people, for that whereas their Khan exacted from them labour, and gave nothing in return,

the Russians paid. I suppose the old man referred to a practice of the Khan, who, when he wants a great work done, such as making a canal or dam, raises a levy.* At the time of the Russian invasion, the Khan directed a levy to be gathered from the districts of Khojeili, Chimbai, and Kungrad, to help the Russian steamers in the Ulkun-daria to ascend the Amu. A certain Yessaul-bashi, who had boasted that he could find the channel for the ships, was authorized to deal as he saw fit with the inhabitants of the delta, and this power he abused by summoning the labourers right and left from their fields in the hope that the unfortunate people would bribe him to let them off, and thus whole villages were fleeced. I know not whether my old host had this sort of thing in mind, or whether he thought that, as we were guests of the Khan, he might expect no payment for his tent and bread and melons; but he appeared very much gratified, and we parted on excellent terms.† Further on I met with Turkomans of various tribes, but more of the Yomuds than any others.

I had now to pay off Yakoob and Taily, for neither wanted to go any further; and as they had found me other men to take their places, there was no reason why they should not return together to Petro-Alexandrovsk. Accordingly I paid Yakoob what was due, and added a present, and I gave a present to Taily too, with which they were both pleased. Yakoob had asked for my portrait, and now kissed my

* As did King Solomon of 30,000 men (1 Kings v. 13).

† This incident, and what transpired about the melons at Koshkupryk, as well as sundry other exactions we had seen, helped to remind me of a custom that obtained in Palestine, under the Persians, when the governors were chargeable unto the people, and took of them bread and wine, from doing which Nehemiah refrained because of the fear of God (Neh. v. 15). Long before this time, however, the people were warned when they asked for a king. This shall be the manner of the king. "He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, . . . and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work" (1 Sam. viii. 11-16)—a picture this of Bokhara and Khiva to the present day.

hand, and seemed to have become attached to us ; but Tailly, I afterwards discovered, was a thief.

The Governor at Petro-Alexandrovsk had given me to understand that Tailly received £7 for taking the post to Krasnovodsk. If, therefore, I chose to take him as my guide, and give him a present, "pour boire," as he said, at the end, I might do so, and this offer I thankfully accepted. Next, to facilitate matters, Tailly was to go forward, and hire for us in Khiva four really good camels, and their owner was to accompany them and us to Krasnovodsk ; for which Tailly thought £6 would suffice. This I gave him, with the understanding that any present to the owner at the end of the journey was to be voluntary on my part. At Khiva he came to us with a story that £6 was insufficient, and I gave him, as he asked, 12s more. Again, at Kunia Urgenj he came trying the milch-cow again, but not successfully this time, though at parting I gave him a present of £1 for his trouble.

It was interesting, therefore, to compare notes one morning at breakfast with our new men, Nazar Mahomet, who replaced Tailly, and Murad, the owner of the four camels. The latter said he had been paid only 24s., and seemed greatly surprised that I had given 33s. for each animal. As for Nazar, who lived at Gazavat, Tailly told him that he received £6 8s. for carrying the post, which he brought as far as Gazavat, and then sent it on by Nazar, over the greater and the worst part of the way, giving him £3 4s., or only half the spoil, leaving him to find his own camel or horse, or do as best he could. Upon this auspicious occasion, however, Tailly had given Nazar nothing, telling him that I should doubtless give him a present of £5, and that if I did not do so he would.

Then, to complete this little *exposé*, Rosy informed us, rightly or wrongly, that Yakoob and Tailly stole melons and ropes from me at our first stopping-place.

and asked him not to tell. Further, they said that, at Kunia Urgenj, Tailly had threatened to cut them across the face with his whip if they dared to expose him ; and as he was a tall, powerful bully, I suppose they thought it better not to provoke him. I knew nothing of this, however, when Tailly and Yakoob left, and we parted with mutual good wishes, the two volunteering the remark to Sevier that they were "well satisfied."

To those who have had much to do with Orientals, I suppose this story will be sufficiently commonplace, and perhaps they will add a caution against believing the informers without sufficient proof. Be that as it may, I was sorry to hear of Yakoob's peccadilloes, which, however, if true, I should be disposed to regard leniently, for he had a conscience, and, on the whole, served us well ; so that, if I were returning to the country, I would willingly employ him again ; though I was not minded to let off Tailly so easily, and took measures to bring him to book.

With Yakoob and Tailly we dismissed, also with a present, the three djiguitts who had escorted us, so that we were now reduced to a party of 5 men. Rosy, after the fashion of the country, had asked for half his pay before starting, had bought a new cloth cap, and otherwise put on a rather more respectable appearance ; but we soon found that he was of inferior calibre to Yakoob—a capital trencherman, but by no means industrious, or one that could be left to his own devices. He was a Sart, and afflicted with the failings of his race. The other two men were black-hatted Uzbegs, brown as berries, but of very different character and temperament, as will be presently seen. I shall speak of the three as Rosy our servant, Murad the camel-owner, and Nazar the postman.

We had started on this our second day from Kunia Urgenj soon after sunrise, and as we went along we passed more ruins, some of them so large that I rode

forward to look them over. I turned aside also here and there to look at the tents of the semi-nomad Turkomans, who tilled patches of land, presenting myself alone, and saluting them with an *Aman!* — one of the few salutations I knew in the vernacular.* At 11 o'clock we came to an aul they told us would be the last habitation we should see for some time, and as Nazar had a brother or relation here, they proposed to stop for 5 hours, and then to set off in real earnest. Accordingly we stretched ourselves in the tent of this friendly Turkoman, the master not being at home on our arrival, though a neighbour unceremoniously came in, nominally to pay a visit, but seemingly to stare at us. Meanwhile they prepared a meal for Sevier and me, and when we had eaten it, the master of the tent returned, and took down a leg of mutton wherewith to feast his friends. When cooked, he invited us to partake, but I declined, saying most truthfully that we had just dined, and wanted no more. Here I forgot that being able to eat no more is a mere figure of speech to a Turkoman, and I am afraid that my host either thought me rude, or attributed my refusal to national or religious exclusiveness, for he gave a polyglot grunt that would be understandable in any language, and appeared to be huffed.

Sevier was able to make a good impression, however, by doctoring him. Soon after entering, our host stretched himself on the floor. Then his boy, 8 or 10 years of age, stood on him, and walked up and down his body, as if kneading the patient with the soles of his feet. This was an intended cure for a pain in the

* This phrase, with *Salaam aleikum*, I observed to be used when two persons met, but I have no recollection of hearing the form of salutation bestowed by a traveller on the road upon a man labouring in the field. I have heard it in Connemara among the Romanists, thus, "God and Mary bless the work!" to which the labourer replies, "And you, too!" and something of the kind appears to be referred to in Ps. cxxix. 8. They who go by say not so much as "The Lord prosper you! We wish you good luck in the name of the Lord!" There is also the case of Boaz and his reapers (Ruth ii. 4).

stomach I had never before seen, nor Sevier, at any of the three European capitals where he had studied, so he proceeded instead to paint the patient with iodine from the ribs to the loins. For this the man seemed to be grateful, and good-fellowship progressed to such a degree that, when the time drew near for us to be moving, the three natives would willingly have stopped for the night. This was precisely what had happened in the case of the Russian doctor and engineer, in whose account we had read that their guide took them as guests to the tent of a friend for two days. I was accordingly ware of the delay, and said "No." Rosy urged that the men did not exactly know the way at night. This difficulty was surmounted by arranging to take a man from the aul as guide. Then our servant further pleaded for a prolonged stay, on the ground that it would be our last stopping-place with fellow "humans," and that our host was such a "right good fellow," with which I agreed, but recommended that they should make haste back and then further cultivate his acquaintance.

When they saw I was firm, they began to load the camels. Hitherto Sevier and I had travelled on horseback, but now we thought it better on starting to "turn in" for the night, and directed the cradles to be prepared accordingly. The other of our new cradles was now pronounced unsound, so as our host happened by a lucky fortune to have an old one at hand, this was patched up and an exchange effected, the articles hitherto placed in the cradles being distributed over the remaining beasts. Now they said that there was too much baggage for 5 camels (the fifth belonging to the postman). It was fully late to find this out, nor was it quite apparent how the defect was to be remedied, for there was only one camel in the *oba*, belonging to an old woman, who was anything but amiable, and seemed not to like my face, declaring she would not let it to me, though I know not exactly why.

Our host began to show us some cheap politeness, as I thought, by saying that had he not recently sold his camel, he would have lent it to us gratis, in recognition of Sevier's kindness in doctoring him without charge. I capped this by answering that, if he were really grateful, he might show it by persuading the old woman outside to hire us her camel. This he pro-



A TURKOMAN BEAUTY IN FESTAL ARRAY.

ceeded with alacrity to do, and for 34s. we secured her treasure to accompany us to Krasnovodsk. The owner gave strict injunctions as to its being brought back by our men, and bade them God-speed, but she would not shake hands with me, a Kafir, and evidently was with difficulty persuaded to let her animal go.

I thought Turkoman women better-looking than their Kirghese sisters, their cheek-bones not being so wide and prominent, and their features more European.

Of course they are uneducated. In this last tent we visited on the Khivan side, the young wife reminded me of one of the native women of the Caucasus, who, when I entered her room, stood behind a pillar, hiding herself like a shy child.

I was desirous of examining a bundle of trinkets dangling at the back of my Turkoman hostess, but she appeared afraid of my doing so ; and when her husband playfully held her by her tresses, she began to cry and struggled away. Presently, when she entered our tent, I noticed she was crying again, and, asking the cause, found myself the unintentional offender. I had observed on her child's cap two Khivan tengas, said to be old. These I bought of the husband as coins, at the price he asked, and they were cut off. Hence her tears. I could hardly suppose her numismatic sensibilities wounded, and I therefore offered her more money, whereupon her tears dried, and she cheered up like a pacified child. I purchased in this tent a pair of silver earrings, which they said were of genuine Turkoman workmanship. The charm on the baby's cap they would not sell, saying that the child would be ill without it !

About seven o'clock all was in readiness, and Sevier and I were to get into our queer sleeping-cages. Let the reader imagine two narrow wooden crates such as earthenware is packed in, each sufficiently large for a man to lie in when twisted to the shape of the letter S ; and let him further imagine them suspended on either side of the huge hump of a kneeling camel. This I am given to understand is to be my sleeping-place for the night, and I accordingly choose my berth on the port-side of this " ship of the desert," first putting into the cradle for a lining a piece of felt, and then two pillows. So far all is well ; but inasmuch as my lodging is to be beneath the frosty sky, it seems desirable to multiply my sleeping garments. First I put on, over my ordinary suit, my jackal-lined khalat,

enveloping me from head to foot, over that my Ulster, and on my head a sheepskin hat, to say nothing of fur-lined boots kindly lent by General Grotenhielm; and then, getting into the cradle, I cover my feet with my sheepskin coat.

And now comes the tug of war! Nazar asks, are we ready; bids us hold on! and says to the camel, *Chu!* whereupon the animal gets up leisurely, first on its hind legs, and in so doing raises our feet to an angle of 60 degrees, thereby threatening to pitch us out bodily. We hold on, however, for dear life, and then comes a lurch from the fore, lifting our heads once more to the horizontal. The fear of danger now is past; but it is not easy at first to get accustomed to the strange motion caused by the long strides of the camel. When the creature was urged to go quickly, the nearest simile for the cradle I can think of is that of a bottle of physic in the process of being "well shaken before taken"; but when the camel walked leisurely, then one lay as in a boat idly tossed by the billows; and sleep became possible just as it is in a Russian tarantass, when one is dead tired, cramped, and "used to it."

But we were not the first night to enjoy our slumbers undisturbed. As we went along we passed some men with huge fires making charcoal, and then towards midnight there came a crash and a bellowing from one of the camels which had fallen. The jerk had broken the ropes, and the baggage lay hither and thither, needing new ropes to secure it afresh. But how to get them? We thought of the charcoal burners, and it was suggested that Sevier and Rosy should go back and inquire whether they had any to sell. Sevier took my horse and Rosy the other, whilst I turned in to my cradle again, now on the ground, and went off to dreamland. Sevier, taught by experience, warned Rosy not to gallop his horse, because not sure-footed; but this was not heeded, and presently

down went the horse, and Rosy, not getting his foot free from the stirrup, was dragged along and bruised, until the horse got free and ran away. Sevier was slightly ahead, and did not at first miss the rider, but when he came back he found him on the ground, calling out, "I'm dead! I'm dead!"

He was brought back alive, notwithstanding, and though sufficiently bruised in various parts to put him in great pain, he was not seriously hurt, and, on looking out of my queer sleeping-place, I could see Sevier doctoring him up and painting him with iodine by the light of the fire. It was a weird, curious sight. There we lay under a lowering midnight sky, the darkness relieved by the glare of a saxaul fire. The camels were kneeling around asleep, and so were the outstretched drivers, whilst Sevier was busy with his groaning patient in the application of bandages.

When at length the doctoring was over, it was plain that the wounded man could neither walk nor ride on horseback, and the only thing left was that he should occupy one of the cradles, to which end I volunteered to give up mine, and to ride Diotrephes for the remainder of the night. I had to speak sharply to the men to rouse them from their slumbers, especially to Murad, whom I perceived to be not in the least hurried, and to take things a great deal more coolly than suited my anxiety to get forward. Matters, moreover, had not been improved by my having heard, through Rosy, that the men had talked of throwing overboard, in the night, the melons and clover in order to lighten the ship. I saw, therefore, that I must be firm, and I spoke in tones that needed no interpreter to show that I meant to be obeyed, and at length we got under way.

Once started, Nazar and Murad became hilarious, and commenced singing, now in duet, now in solo, but never in harmony, and always in dubious melody. In one of his strains Murad's voice, whether intentionally or

otherwise, approached perilously near to the braying of a donkey, but he seemed to enjoy it, and it helped to keep me awake. For a time I got on pretty well, sometimes walking and sometimes riding, but the wind was cold ; and as we passed ruin after ruin the "Queen of night rose not in clouded majesty, nor o'er the dark her silver mantle threw." Not even an owl swooped by, and the gloom was decidedly uninspiring.

In plain English, I began to get fearfully sleepy and tired, and I had so far the satisfaction of seeing that it was no singular weakness on my part, inasmuch as the local guide, who went on ahead, now and then galloped a little further than usual, and then got off his horse and lay on the ground for a few minutes' sleep till the caravan came up. I did not attempt this, but vainly tried in all sorts of ways to put myself in a posture for horseback sleep. Then I called in the aid of reason, and argued how useful it might be in my experience to have spent one night thus out in the open ; what sympathy it would give me in future for policemen, night-watchmen, nurses, and such persons. Other thoughts too, better than of reason's light, came to my aid about self-denial, and "enduring hardness," with sundry other appropriate reflections.

So things went on till Aurora opened the gates of morning, and dawn found us at the four wells of Karategin, or Kara-Kum, in the dry bed of the Oxus. Here we were to draw water for the first time, and to prepare breakfast at a camp fire ; so, after directing Rosy to cook a pheasant, I was minded to turn into the cradle for a nap ; but sunrise brought vigour to my fatigued limbs, and I could not sleep amid such novel surroundings. My thoughts were speedily taken back to the days of Abraham, and the herdmen of Gerar striving with Isaac's herdmen at the well of Contention.*

We were upon the verge of doing the same thing, without my knowing it, at Karategin, for a shepherd

* Gen. xiii. 7 ; xxvi. 20.

had come before us to water his flock, and, being "first come," had a right to be "first served." This, however, would not only cause us delay, but by the time his bucket had descended often enough to give drink to a thousand sheep, the water, if there were any left, would be so muddy as to be unfit to put into our barrels. My men represented this to the shepherd, and ominously added that the Englishman carried a revolver, and would certainly shoot him if he did not give way. This impromptu story caused the shepherd to yield, so that I was not called upon to carry out their murderous threat, and Nazar proceeded to get water, drawing it, to my astonishment, in the horses' nosebags! This was the nearest approach I had seen to "holding water in a sieve," but the bags, being made of thick woollen material, answered the purpose admirably. We were also able to purchase some more rope here, and our local guide went back to his aul.

Breakfast went off pretty well for a first occasion. The pheasant was preceded by *potage au faisan*, and we made an attack upon our Russian bread from Petro-Alexandrovsk. When looking over the hospital there, I had tasted the patients' bread, and was so pleased that I asked the General if the baker might make me a number of loaves, and these we had been saving till we could get no more fresh native nans or bread-cakes. The Russian loaves were now 12 days old, and, truth compels me to add, were *getting* hard; but we soaked the bread in tea, besides which we had cream that was wondrously accommodating. On opening the keg at even, the motion of the camel was found to have converted it into "whipped" cream, whereas in the morning the frost of night had given us "iced" cream, and in the middle of the day we had *crème au naturel*. Then we sliced a melon, and having thus partaken of *déjeuner à la fourchette* at the somewhat abnormal hour of sunrise, I directed the camels to be reloaded.

First, however, I had a little serious talk with the men concerning despatch. From the very outset, even as far back as Petro-Alexandrovsk, I had found it difficult to get a satisfactory answer from Tailly to the straightforward question, "How many days will it take you to get us from Khiva to Krasnovodsk?" He said about 12 or 14 days, and mumbled out some sort of reckoning, at which the General only laughed, and said the man did not really know. The Russian doctor and engineer had taken 17 days from Iliali, but in hot weather, and had been compelled to rest, whereas we were going by a longer route, though in a cool month. I gravely put it, therefore, to the men as to how many days it would take them to reach Krasnovodsk from where we were.

They answered "Nine." "Very well," said I. "Then for every day less than nine I will add ten shillings to the present I am thinking of giving you; whilst for every day you take more than nine I shall deduct ten shillings." Remembering also what I had heard of their intention to fling overboard some of my possessions, I informed them that, if they lost any of my belongings, they might expect to have the cost of it deducted from the present. They assented to this arrangement and then we started.

Our way lay for 14 miles along the Urun-daria, the old watercourse by which the Oxus used to reach the Caspian, so that as we marched along the bottom of its bed with the rising banks on either hand, we had the pleasure of imagining how, in bygone centuries, fishes sported in the space we occupied, and how gallant ships went over our heads with cargoes of Asiatic produce to be transported over the Caucasus to the Black Sea and onwards, for the aristocrats of ancient Greece and Rome. We started to walk in the fresh morning air, but instead of meeting anything to remind us of "the briny deep," or rather fluvial remains, we came upon three or four flocks of sheep and goats, with

their shepherd, who was to be our "last man" for many days.

Since my retinue had eaten so ravenously of my butcher's meat, I had offered to purchase a sheep at Karategin, but the shepherd had only one that he cared to sell, and, what was worse, would be paid only in silver, and not paper, which latter circulating medium the country people in Khiva do not take to kindly; and it certainly would not have been convenient for this unhoused shepherd to carry in his pocket for many days, since he was simply "abiding in the field" with his flock. On the other hand, I could not spare so large a proportion of my Russian coin, lest I might want small change further on, and so negotiations fell through, much, I fancy, to the disgust of Murad, who was hoping for a share of the prospective mutton feast. The second shepherd had shot a fawn, which he sold us for 3*s.* 8*d.*, and thus we added venison to our marching larder. We passed three wells, but saw no other reminder of inhabitants, save some arbas for the transport of firewood. At 2 o'clock we came to Igin, or Egen-Klych bent—that is, the "bent," or dam, of Egen-Klych, a Turkoman of that name, who built it in 1841, by the help of 100 workmen in 6 months.

We now had the ruin Benam-baladi on the left, and ascending out of the river bed we passed by a ruined fortified place called Mashrek. These ruins have not the character of an ordinary fortress, but consist of a large area surrounded by a shallow moat and a low wall. Within are numerous clay houses, some well preserved, and between them streets and squares. These ruins have been deserted not much more than a quarter of a century—at the same time, in fact, as the ruins we had passed on the previous day.

At half-past four, about 3 miles beyond the ruins of Mashrek, we came to what was deemed to be a suitable place to encamp till midnight. Here we pitched our tent for the first time, and were reminded

of the kindness of General Grotenhielm in lending it, for it suited our wants exactly. We were offered the use of a larger one, but preferred this *yulamaika*, its construction and erection being alike simple.

Taking the two pieces of felt from the cradles, we laid them side by side for the tent floor. Next we spread thereon a number of rods, perhaps 8 feet long, and joined at the top so as to stand like a cone, leaving two wider apart than the others for a doorway. Then summoning all hands, we hauled over this cone a huge shape of thick felt, all in one piece, that covered everything, and left a flap for entrance. We next folded other felts and placed pillows for two beds, leaving a space between for the dining arrangements—a change truly from the spacious halls and palaces wherein we had been lately lodged, but amusing enough in its way at first and for a limited time. Rosy was quickly voted a very fair cook. His pheasant soup at even was pronounced excellent by hungry men, whose last meal had been eaten at sunrise, whilst the venison was the best of its kind I think I have tasted before or since.

There was one thing that specially impressed this our first encampment on my mind, in that we could see across a plain, about 7 miles from the camp, but only 3 or 4 miles north of the road we had come, the ruins of a town now called Deu-Kesken, doubtless none other than the ancient Vezir, where the first of the Uzbeks, Sultan Ilbars, was proclaimed Khan, in 1512. It is the "Sellizure" of Jenkinson, who, so far as I know, is the only Englishman who has ever entered the ancient Vezir. As the sun went down upon this interesting ruin, we retired for a few hours' sleep, and at midnight resumed our journey.

CHAPTER XL.

INCIDENTS OF A CAMEL JOURNEY.

Order of march and loading camels.—Tragical end of a china basin.—Climbing a camel's hump.—The Oxus bed at Ak-bugut.—Cliffs of the Ust Urt.—The Kitchkine-daria.—The pool at Dekche.—Wells of Sary Kamish.—Correction of Murad for stealing.—Character of guides.—Arrival at Sary Kamish.—Lakes of Sary Kamish and their characteristics.—Testing specific gravity of water.—Crossing the lake basin to the Ust Urt.

WHEN urging upon Tailly that I was anxious to cross the desert with all possible despatch, he had intimated that our plan would be to encamp about sunset, let the camels graze for a couple of hours, then collect them for 2 hours' sleep, and go on again at midnight. He thought it necessary to add that we must get up when called, or he could not undertake to get us to our destination in the specified time. He evidently thought he was dealing with feather-bed travellers, whose night and morning views about early rising would not agree, instead of with one who professes to rise at 5 all the year round, and who gets up every morning at the bidding of an alarum. I had taken with me one of these comforts of my life, and before midnight was stirring up the natives, who lay snoring round the fire, by gentle applications of shoe-leather. They did not seem to appreciate this disturbance of their "beauty" sleep, but I thought it better from the outset to enforce discipline, and made them stir.

We also lent a hand in loading. I cannot pretend that getting a caravan under way on a dark night is no more uncomfortable than changing carriages at a railway junction ; still, both no doubt have their points of interest. Sevier and I always undertook the arrangement of our cradles, which were hoisted by 4 on to the back of the leading camel. Then came the loading of the water-barrels, oval in shape, and resting on short, wide ladders, against the animals' flanks—a great improvement on *tursuks*, or skins, which communicate, I am told, an ill-flavour to the water they carry. For the loan of these barrels we were indebted also to the kindness of General Grotenhielm. This load was assigned to the animal we had last hired, a female, that gave herself airs like her mistress. So long as the creature was let alone, all was well ; but when made to kneel, whether to be laden or unladen, she whined and roared as if being imposed upon, and tried to get up before she was told. I assumed the function, therefore, of holding her down by the nose, and more than once had to thank merely my own cleverness in not getting my fingers bitten. She was, however, a strong beast, that never flagged. The third animal carried our portmanteaus and bags ; the fourth had a sack of barley and fodder for the horses. On the fifth were the tent poles and a strong crate, with our food and live-stock. By this last I mean chickens tied by the legs, and at first suspended by Murad from the top of the saddle, until I saw them suffering, and directed them to be placed in the crate. Even so they voted camel travel very fatiguing, and one of them succumbed, though the others were ready, on stopping, for barley and water, until it came to their turn to be eaten. The sixth camel brought up the rear with a bundle on its back as big as itself, consisting of the tent, on the top of which Murad loved to mount, and, if possible, go to sleep, whilst Nazar trudged in front, or rode one of the horses, dragging on the foremost camel of the

nose-tied caravan, which had very much the appearance of a Kirghese family flitting, save that we had no cows.

Rosy, though much improved by doctoring, was not yet sufficiently recovered to mount a horse without pain. Accordingly, on leaving Kunia Vezir, Sevier generously gave up his cradle and rode, whilst Rosy and I, on opposite sides, "turned in." Presently we had to "turn out," for about 4 o'clock I heard an ominous cracking of my cradle, and I thought it best to get down.

But how should I make Nazar comprehend? Sevier was not at hand, and Rosy was snoring. Almost the only native word I knew was *Yakshi*, meaning "All right!" whereas just then I feared things were all wrong, and I vainly called out in Russian, *Stoi!* or stop. Suddenly remembering the word used by the drivers when they wished the camel to kneel, I shouted *Chok! Chok!* whereupon the sapient animal went down suddenly upon its knees with a thud. The jerk broke out the side of my cradle completely, and I descended to *terra firma* with unexpected alacrity.

My head, however, was pillowed on down, and fortunately I was not hurt. Meanwhile, on the other side of the ship things had taken a different turn, explanatory of the pathetic end of the china basin, as recently hinted. We had but one of these useful articles, and fearing to put it into the crate, lest it should be broken, I committed it to Rosy, to carry, as he suggested, in his bosom. Later, however, he transferred it to the interior of his sheepskin hat, and he was enjoying his slumbers when the crash came, and he was pitched out on his head, not to the breaking of his skull, indeed, but to the utter destruction of my china basin!

It took Rosy a few minutes to realize in all its bearings this sudden termination of his dreams, and then I saw that he was disposed to take a serious view

of matters. This was the second time his perpendicularity had been inverted, and he now solemnly informed us that if he were thrown upon his head again he would die! This, of course, we deprecated, as we had not yet made sufficient progress in the vernacular, and we accordingly roped up the broken cradle, once more to turn in.

The men suggested, however, that, in deference to the frailty of the broken panier, we should not get in whilst the camel was kneeling, but after it had risen. This was a feat less difficult of accomplishment, no doubt, than climbing an elephant's trunk, but by no means easy. First, Murad was made to tuck his head in the camel's shoulder, whilst I climbed up his back on to the camel's neck, my first landing-stage, after which it remained to struggle over the front of the pack-saddle, and let one's self descend into the cradle, the opposite panier being held down till my fellow-rider arrived by the same route, and established the equilibrium.

During the night, after marching three miles, we approached again the bed of the Oxus at Ak-bugut, or white dam, 12 miles from Egen-Klych by the road, but many more by the river bed, which in this reach is particularly tortuous. This last remark will hold good of our road, more or less, all the way from Kunia Urgenj.

Thus far from this town the country on the south had been a level plain, whilst on the north this plain abuts on the Ust Urt plateau, the escarpment or border of which is called in Turki *Chink*.

After reaching the Oxus beyond Ak-bugut, and north of the Butenau hills, we stopped at sunrise, on November 11th, for breakfast, and encamped at sunset at Jedurun, in or near the dry bed called Kitchkine-daria, or "little river," a stream that branches off from the old Oxus bed about two miles from where we last crossed it, and runs parallel thereto, but at a distance of from 1 to 2 miles, to Sary Kamish. We were now passing between the Butenau hills on the left, and

the Chink on the right, with a valley 8 miles between of friable, clayey soil, mixed with stones. Saline patches were visible, and much tamarisk, and in the morning we passed through a fine wood of saxaul, with white willows here and there in favoured localities. On the preceding day we flushed a pheasant, and later saw crows and a finch, and here and there the tracks of sheep, but otherwise few signs of animal life.

On the next morning, November 12th, I was in an indulgent mood, gave the men an extra rest, and did not stir them up till 4 o'clock, and by 9 we had reached Dekche. This was now the third day since we had taken water, and the horses were faint from being restricted in drink, and also from finding little on the ground to eat. But at Dekche there was "corn in Egypt," though not easily accessible, for both grass and water were at the rush-grown bottom of a deep gorge in the Oxus bed, and just there the banks were quite imposing. The right bank, though of clay, obstinately resisting atmospheric influences, was much weatherbeaten, and stood up before us like a cliff, as we scrambled down a narrow path on the opposite bank, to water our animals and refill the barrels.

Rosy told us that the Russian engineers stayed at Dekche, with their Cossack escort, for 6 weeks, and we unladed our camels close to the earthworks they had thrown up. The place commanded a good view of the cliffs of the Ust Urt, with well-marked horizontal indentations. As we descended into the gorge the path contracted in one place to a few inches between rocks, and here was cleverly set, not a man-trap, but a smaller one with teeth to catch some luckless gazelle going down to drink. This led us to think there might be Turkomans in the vicinity, in which case it seemed desirable not to leave our baggage unguarded. Murad told us for our comfort that in this very place, three years before, the post had been attacked and robbed; but as he himself had been robbed some ten

or a dozen times, he seemed to make little of it. We had seen no habitations since we left the Turkoman's tent, but I have read that in this neighbourhood there are to be found here and there under thickets, subterraneous sheds, deserted in summer, but into which, in winter, cattle are driven on the approach of danger.

On leaving Dekche we proceeded ten miles to the wells of Sary Kamish, in the Oxus bed, where the surface of the water was 18 feet deep. I did most of the way in the cradle. Sevier gave up his panier all the morning to Rosy, who was much better, though still taking very kindly to the cradle, and perfectly content to be treated as an invalid! About 5 o'clock we reached the wells, which are within sight of the great lake; and here we had to descend so steep a path that the men desired us to get out of the cradles, lest the camel should fall and break its legs. Thus far we had met with no piece of road, I think, whereon our tarantass might not have been drawn, but now it would have been out of the question.

For some reason unknown to me our men wanted to stop at the wells Sary Kamish only two hours, and then to go rapidly on for a long journey, as they said, on the morrow. This was our fifth day from Kunia Urgenj, and up to this time we had accomplished only about 85 miles, or not much more than I have sometimes posted in Siberia in 12 hours, and I was beginning to get tired of this slow progress. I reminded the men of their probable lessening of the present they hoped to receive; but they did not appear much concerned. An incident now occurred, however, that brought my dissatisfaction to a climax, for, on going to the crate to get half a water-melon we had left uneaten, I found its pinky flesh scooped out and the rind only left. Murad was the culprit, whom Sevier had seen put in his great black hand, and tear out the luscious morsel. I called him up, and charged him with purloining, whereupon he said that when the crate fell,

which it had done early in the day, one of the camels had put his nose into the crate and cleaned out the melon. Sevier, however, witnessed against him, and I gave him a lecture.

But shortly after Rosy came to divulge that Murad had stolen about five-and-twenty, or nearly half, of my native bread-cakes, whereupon I felt that it was high time for me to turn policeman, and to give him something more than sharp words, which by the time they had left me in English, Sevier in Russian, and Rosy in Turki, had lost much of their flavour. I adopted, therefore, a corrective idea from Captain Burnaby's book, and holding up the bag with the remaining cakes before Murad's face, I addressed him in English, and, to make it understandable, I administered on his back two or three sharp cuts with my horsewhip. He wore so many khalats over his well-seasoned hide that I do not think he was much hurt, but under the consciousness of guilt his swarthy face became a few shades darker than before, and Sevier cried out that he acknowledged himself wrong, promising not to offend again; whereupon I desisted.

I know not whether this narrative may cause some to think that I was forgetting my profession, but I acted advisedly and thought I was right. We were not yet half-way to the Caspian, and if I did not in some way establish my authority, we might have half our provisions stolen. There was no policeman, magistrate, or bek within scores of miles, and I could not rid myself of the thief either by advance or by retreat. I was thankful, therefore, that I had the courage to "take the bull by the horns" and administer what the French call *une petite correction*, and it had precisely the effect that I wished.

Murad slunk off to Nazar, and presently a message came in the plural number to say that, if I scolded and beat them, they would go back, which united action I counter-manœuvred by telling both that they had only

to be honest and all would be well, and adding that I was not angry with Nazar. This honourable exception pleased Nazar, and he thanked me, and, what was better, proved himself afterwards true as steel. Murad continued the idle, sleepy lout he had been all along, putting his work, when he could, on the others, and wanting to ride when Nazar walked ; but I had established my position as master, and he obeyed, so that henceforward we got on better.

After resting three hours at the well, we ascended out of the river bed by a path equally difficult to that by which we had entered. Murad's temper had not quite recovered, and he said at first that they were going back, but made no attempt in that direction, and soon after midnight we came to a land of reeds and rushes. Then the men came to say that the camels were so tired that they must rest, for one of them was ill ; also that it was so dark they could not see the way. With regard to the camels I thought it a lie, but as for the other plea, if they did not know the way, certainly I could not tell them, nor blame them, for it was so dark as to surprise me how they could make out the way at all. I gave permission, therefore, to stop and rest till daybreak, when, on opening our eyes, we saw stretched out in the grey light of morning the little-known lakes of Sary Kamish.

Lake Sary Kamish, or, as the Turkomans call it, "Betandali Goel," comprises, properly speaking, two elongated sheets of water, united by a narrow and sinuous strait, two-thirds of a mile wide and 7 miles long.

When daylight showed us our whereabouts on the morning of November 13th, we found ourselves at the north end of the first lake, in a dry portion of its present basin, whence we proceeded in a south-westerly direction, about 3 miles distant from the water, till in the afternoon we approached sufficiently near to the second lake to lead me to ride forward, and

attempt to get to the water for the purpose of testing its specific gravity ; but within a stone's throw of the margin my horse sank to the knees, and I was obliged to desist. Returning to the caravan for assistance, Nazar brought me to another place, where, tucking up my trousers, I found myself also sinking to the knees within a dozen feet of the water's edge. I dared not undress, because I could see no means of washing off the mud with which I must inevitably be covered on wading out to *terra firma*. On the other hand, I did not like to be so near the goal and not attain to it. Whereupon Nazar and I plucked some tussocks of a bushy, prickly plant, which was the only vegetation growing near, and, putting these before me step by step, and putting my bare feet thereon, I managed, at the cost of scratching myself, to keep from going down out of all soundings, and to attain to the edge of the lake. The water was clear, but intensely salt—more so than sea-water—and so great was its density, that my instrument for the determination of the specific gravity of different waters, and graduated from 0° to 100° , would not sink below a point which, had the scale been continued, would have read 120° .

I was fortunate, or unfortunate, as the reader may regard it, in not attempting to bathe in Sary Kamish. A member of Glukhovsky's expedition found a stony beach on the south-east of the upper lake, and, on going in to have a swim, reported the water so buoyant that, at 100 paces from the beach, he could hardly dive. The lower parts of the water appeared a greenish yellow, and viscous like oil, with a disagreeable odour, that, in the course of a long walk on the beach, produced in him a sensation of nausea. The buoyancy of the water reminded one of the Dead Sea, which these lakes resemble further in that the natives say they contain no fish. The banks are deserted. Gulls, Woodcocks, and Ducks, however, are sometimes seen

flying over the water, and we saw in the course of the afternoon a Magpie and a Dun Crow.

Leaving the water to our left, we crossed a piece of rising ground, and on looking back we had rather a pretty view of the lakes, but the place was barren of trees. We came about 3.30 to a promontory, Kakh-Pular, and to sands on our left of the same name, whilst the sands to the right of the road are called Kyzyl-Kaia. At Kakh-Pular we pitched our tent, as my notes have it, "near what looks like the dried basin of a large lake."

We started on the morning of November 14th, at 1, stopped for 3 hours at sunrise, and at half-past 2 arrived at the cliffs, which had long bounded our horizon. I have no note or recollection of the hollow way, or water-course, which, according to my map, we must have crossed, but we noticed particularly at the foot of the cliffs a narrow line of beach, or pebbles, rounded apparently by the action of water, and mixed with sand and shells, which we at first took to be evidence indicative of an ancient sea shore; and as we were mounting a declivity, or natural ramp, in the cliffs, it looked, in common parlance, just as if we were emerging from the sea at low water, across beach washed up by the last tide, on the southern English coast, and mounting the downs, say, at Newhaven or Eastbourne. Then, on looking back from a height, one could think of the vast expanse of land stretching to the horizon as of nothing else but the bed of a former lake or sea.

CHAPTER XLI.

FROM SARY KAMISH TO THE CASPIAN.

Mounting the Ust Urt.—The well Uzun Kuyu.—Saxaul and other fuel.—Bread baken on the coals.—Capture of a gazelle.—Remains of sun worship.—Troubles with attendants.—Breakfast on a camel's back.—The wells of Kazakhli.—The bay of Kaplan Kir.—A dry ocean bed.—The wells of Kum-sebshem.—Ascent from the bed of Kaplan Kir.—Road to well of Seikiz Khan.—Improved prospects, but low spirits.—Search of Bible for illustrative passages.—Lack of domestic comforts.—Revival of hope at sight of Caspian.—The pond of Porsu.—Gazelles.—A sixteen hours' march.—Oriental customs illustrated.—Fauna of the steppe.—The land tortoise.—A teetotaller's experience.—Last night on the camel's back.—Mouldy bread and tattered garments.—Arrival at Krasnovodsk.

WE ascended from the lacustrine bed of Sary Kamish at half-past 2 on the afternoon of November 14th, to make for Uzun Kuyu, or "deep well," 27 miles distant. After toiling up a hill we found ourselves on an immense table-land, bounded on the side of the lake with cliffs, that still bore traces of being water-worn. The receding waters had left a long, narrow line of beach, and shells similar to those found at Krasnovodsk on the shore of the Caspian, and, as we passed over them, I hoped that now we might be about half-way on our journey, but to our great disappointment we were told that it was not so. We could soon see, however, that we had attained to a very different tract of country—an excellent specimen of a level steppe, where there was not a hill to be seen all round, nor was the line of the horizon cut by so

much as a tree, hardly a bush, but the surface was covered with a coarse, scrubby vegetation. The soil was not saline, but stony, though the stones were not rounded like those in the bed of the lake. Our men had asked to stop at midday to bake their bread, whereupon I gave them some of mine, and insisted upon their going on. Thus we continued marching till 9 in the evening, hoping to reach the well at Uzun Kuyu; but, failing to do so, we stopped till an hour past midnight to rest, for which I was quite prepared, having spent 8 hours in the saddle that day.

Before daybreak the men judged us to be near Uzun Kuyu, but said they could not find the well in the dark; and at sunrise this was seen to be perfectly reasonable, for there was no erection to mark the spot, and we might have easily walked by, or, for that matter, into it. This was one of the deep wells of which we had been forewarned. I reckoned it 180 feet, but Markozoff 133 feet, to the water. Accordingly, Nazar did not straddle over the top, as in other cases; but, finding a stake placed athwart the well, he let down his nose-bags, and then fastened the rope to a camel to draw them up. The water, containing sulphuretted hydrogen, had a disagreeable smell and taste, with a specific gravity indicating on my hygrometer 102 degrees.

With this deterioration of water there came another change in our lot. Thus far we had made our fires of saxaul, the well-known fuel of Central Asia. At Petro-Alexandrovsk, General Grotenhielm gave me a piece of this singular wood, about the thickness of the thumb, but grown into a knot, the size of a double fist, and as curiously intertwined as if it had been rope. East of Sary Kamish we passed through little forests of it, the trees being 12 or 14 feet high, and it was curious to find that, though so hard as to defy the cutting of a switch with a pocket-knife, yet one could break off great boughs thicker than one's wrist. On our first evening upon the Ust Urt there were only dwarfed

clumps of saxaul, about as high as a gooseberry-bush, and these, strange to say, we could break off at the root, so that the collection of sufficient fuel was an easy task. But Rosy had told me that we should have no more saxaul; and when I asked what we should do, he replied that "I should see" at Uzun Kuyu. And truly I did so, for he had gone on a little ahead, had ignited an immense lump of horse and camel dung, and this was to be our fuel for the rest of the way.

It was no part of my business to feed Nazar and Murad, and, that we might be quite clear upon this point, I asked them, before we left Kunia Urgenj, if they had plenty of their own provisions. They replied that they had a bag of flour, but they hoped I should give them what we left of the mutton. This was a contrast, truly, to the many things I was taking! They had, indeed, the advantage of new bread instead of stale, in that they wet flour in a wooden dish, and then baked the dough in the ashes of the fire. I did not taste the cake thus "baken on the coals," like that of Elijah in the wilderness;* but after our bread robbery, when provision was running short, I asked them to feed Rosy also on native bread, in exchange for other things. This they said they would do, and graciously added that, if our bread supply ran out, we should have some of theirs. This, so far, was obliging; and so long as the bread was cooked in wood ashes, one, perhaps, might eat it, failing anything else; but when I saw them cook their bread in precisely the same way, putting it uncovered into fuel of dung, I am afraid it lessened my confidence as to having a store to fall back upon.†

An unexpected opportunity occurred of adding to

* 1 Kings xix. 6.

† The preparation of bread in this way manifestly throws light upon the manner in which Ezekiel (iv. 12-15) was commanded to prepare his bread, as prefiguring coming scarcity.

our larder at Uzun Kuyu; for Sevier, wandering about after breakfast, came upon an empty well, about 10 feet deep, with a funnel-shaped mouth, the sides of which bore vegetation. He had the curiosity to go near and look in, and saw, to his surprise, at the bottom a Persian gazelle. It was quite young, of exquisitely graceful form, and, when it saw us, made frantic but vain efforts to spring out of its prison-house. Our camels had drunk nothing since the third day, and I would not have the natives told till they had watered them and filled the barrels, lest their hunting propensities should be excited and we should lose time; but, when all was ready, I pointed out to our men the captive. Nazar immediately volunteered to be let down to secure the little beauty, which it seemed the height of cruelty to kill. Something was said about bringing it alive to London, but it was manifestly out of the question, so the grim office of the butcher was entrusted to our butler Rosy. I watched him particularly, and observed that he looked up to the part of the heavens whence the sun was shining, and turned the animal in that direction. Then Murad (who was standing by) and he stroked their beards, and apparently uttered a prayer, after which Rosy cut the animal's throat. I afterwards noticed Rosy, when killing a chicken, do the same, but I fancied they seemed rather ashamed of it, and not willing to explain the matter.* I observed further that Rosy, before cutting the gazelle's throat, scooped out a hole, and then covered up its blood. I asked why he covered the blood, and he said, "For good luck, that we soon may catch another." †

* It struck me as a possible remnant of the very ancient sun worship to which, perhaps, Job alludes (xxxi. 26, 27), and Ezekiel (viii. 16), who saw 25 men, with their backs towards the temple of the Lord, and their faces towards the east, who worshipped the sun: the same idolatry that was forbidden to the children of Israel (Deut. iv. 19), and punishable with death (xvii. 3-5).

† Whether this had any religious origin I know not; but Dr. Hermann Adler tells me the Jews act similarly in obedience to the command

Before leaving Uzun Kuyu I took Nazar to task about what I considered the slow progress we were making. I also lectured Rosy for his idleness and putting his work upon others. In fact, I found that Nazar was at once the best servant and the weak man of the three, for he allowed the other two to impose upon him. He said he was perfectly willing to hasten; but Murad was the lazy fellow, who had told Nazar that, having received his money beforehand, he did not want his camels hurried, and cared not to push on.

This was plain speaking, though not intended for me, and I determined that Murad should not have it all his own way. If I set him to lead the camels, and allowed Nazar to rest in one of the cradles, Murad dawdled so tantalizingly that I took the camel string out of his hand, and on horseback, or walking, led the caravan myself. Nazar quickly pronounced me an able camel-leader, and said that if I continued in office we should make excellent headway.

Thus we travelled from Uzun Kuyu towards the next wells at Kazakhli, the road continuing along the level elevation of the Ust Urt over excessively hard soil, almost devoid of vegetation, but never so bare that the camels could not find food. We rested as usual, and started again at midnight. Soon afterwards we missed Rosy and Murad, who rode the horses, whilst Nazar, on foot, led the caravan, and Sevier and I were "in bed." The sun rose and gilded the plain, but nothing could we see of Rosy or Murad. To lose the caravan in such a spot, and without provisions, would mean almost certain death, and I began to

in Leviticus xvii. 13: "Whatsoever man there be . . . which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust." Maimonides supposes that one of the reasons of this command was to prevent the Israelites from assembling round the blood to eat meals as was the custom of idolatrous nations. Rosy looking up to the sun and uttering a prayer recalls Ezekiel xxxiii. 25, "Ye eat with the blood and lift up your eyes toward your idols."

wonder whether I should have to go back to look for their corpses—and not only for them, but my journal also, which, for safe keeping, I had placed in my saddle-bag.

Then came breakfast time, when we were to try an experiment. Nazar, who seemed inclined to push on, had pointed out, and truly, how much time we wasted by stopping to cook breakfast, and said, on the 15th, that if we halted only once a day, we might get to Krasnovodsk in about 4 days more. We resolved, therefore, not to stop, but to eat this meal comfortably on the camel's back. The pack-saddle was extemporized into a table, cold pheasant was served from the cradle as a sideboard, and cold tea drunk from my enamelled bottle. We had besides, venison, bread, biscuits, apples, and pears, all which may read very well, and savour perchance of romance, for it caused us at first to laugh, but in reality it was intensely disagreeable. The sand blew in our plates, the shaking was enough to upset one's digestion for a week, and for 12 hours matters were not brightened by the prolonged absence of the two deserters. At last we saw some fresh horse-tracks, and about noon came upon our men near Kazakhli.

According to my map we should have passed, since leaving Uzun Kuyu, two pools of sweet water. Perhaps it was at the latter of these they stopped for us, since Rosy had kindled a fire, and he muttered some sort of excuse that they had gone forward to prepare for us; but I have no recollection of seeing any water till we came to the Kazakhli wells, two in number, about 120 feet deep. We did not linger at the well, though my attention was attracted to a gully, widening into a ravine, running away therefrom, having cliffs on either side, with the earth near the surface hanging in stalactites, and the bottom descending so rapidly, that I was minded to ride along it, to see whither it led; but the camels were started in another direction, and I followed,

meaning to advance to the top of the hill and look down. I did so, and shall not easily forget the sight, for it amply repaid me for crossing the desert. The ruins of Kunia Urgenj had been interesting, so had the old bed of the Oxus and Sary Kamish, but I had heard of these beforehand.

Not so with the landscape of what I am disposed to christen the "Bay of Kaplan Kir," though I have in my notes the words "Ku-yurt-nu-Kurrah," the meaning of which I have forgotten.

A short distance beyond the well Kazakhli there suddenly burst upon our sight an enormous bay, or horse-shoe depression, apparently of the sea, bounded on the right by a cliff, trending away westward for 30 miles to the well Dirun, or Dirin, and on the left for a greater distance towards the south, whilst the western walls of the bay were formed of the cliffs Begendjalri Kir. Within this depression was the well of Kumsebshem, our next point to make for, and 23 miles from Uzun Kuyu.

But what struck me as so remarkable were the manifest tokens of the locality having been once a lake, or a bay of the sea, though now completely dried up. One may occasionally be taken to an English hill-top, and be told by some geological friend that the prospect before you was once under water, and, in deference to his learning, you accept the information, albeit that trees and grass and corn are growing on every hand; but at Kaplan Kir, when I peeped over the cliff, as one might do at Ramsgate, I saw places hollowed out by the billows in the face of the limestone, and the marks left by the water-rills. Nor was this all; for the chalk was worn away into colossal spires, columns, and minarets, into pillars and turrets, and buttresses and towers, as white and clean as if the tide had only recently gone down. There were caves and grottoes, and coves and caverns in which, by the aid of imagination, one could see the fishes, perhaps, of

a former geological epoch swimming about just as one sees their modern types in the rocky tanks of the Brighton Aquarium. The water was the one thing wanting. I will not venture the hyperbole that I could almost "smell the briny," or trace any remains of sea-weed ; but the phenomenon was so remarkable, and unlike anything I had seen elsewhere in Europe, Asia, or America, that, like Columbus discovering a new world, I became, in my little way, quite excited.

We descended into the bed by a natural ramp, so steep that the cradles had to be unoccupied, and our horses led ; and when we reached the bottom, about a mile from Kazakhli, and skirted the northern shore, we had on our right an elevation that brought to my mind Shakespeare's Cliff at Dover, whilst, a little further ahead, rose out of what was once the sea another St. Michael's Mount, lying off the coast of Cornwall.

The cliff on our right, rising about 300 feet, needed no geologist to see that it was formed of three sharply-defined strata—the uppermost of earth, the centre of limestone, and the lowest of sandy clay. The face of the cliff was not everywhere uniform. Here and there were natural caverns, and between what I have imaginatively called Shakespeare's Cliff and St. Michael's Mount, huge masses of the upper stratum had been hurled below. The cliffs had a well-defined water-mark all along their face, above which they were generally inclined, but perpendicular below it. The sandy plain, whereinto we had descended, was what the Russians call a *solonchak*, or salt steppe, which had on it a poor, scrubby vegetation.*

* The prospect brought to one's mind "The sea saw it, and fled" ; "He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers" (Psalm cxiv. 3 ; Nahum i. 4),—a fact seen here on a large scale. All around was a flat plain, marked with the whitey deposits of salt, like those we had seen in the bed of Sary Kamish ; and the only signs of animal life, after a Jackdaw who paid us a visit at the well, were the chirping of a chance bird, hills thrown up by Ants, and the Marmots,

We encamped in this supposed sea-bed, where the vegetation was so scanty and distasteful to our horses that they would not touch it. On the next morning, at 8 o'clock, we came to the wells of Kum-sebshem. Here were "twelve wells of water," but *not* "threescore and ten palm trees," and we "encamped there by the waters." * There was not a vestige about these wells to give a clue to their age. They were well built, and for the most part in good repair. There was a little grass about the place, and the water was good, so that whilst the men were watering the camels and replenishing the barrels, we made some tea; but the camels were not all unpacked, which proved afterwards to have been a mistake. These wells were 100 feet higher, according to my aneroid, than the place where we last encamped, but we marched in the sea-bed another 4 miles, and then at 11 o'clock ascended 300 feet out of its bed, on to the hill Begendjalri Kir, the cliffs running from N.W. to S.E.

The coming out of the bed was as remarkable as descending into it, for towards the top of the ramp the chalky cliffs were worn into resemblance to a chain of snow mountains, that I fancifully called the "Bernese Oberland," with crevasses here and there, and well-marked rifts, caused apparently by the running of water. Here, too, jutting out beyond a promontory, was another "St. Michael's Mount." On reaching the top, I turned round to gaze at this wonderful landscape. Diotrephes did not appreciate the scenery a bit, for the caravan was gone on, and the loneliness of the desert had given him a strong aversion to being left behind, or getting far away from his companions. I made him stand, however, whilst I vainly asked myself what it all meant. *When* had the voice gone forth to the waters, Be dry? †

which undermined "the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited" (Jer. xvii. 6).

* Exod. xvi. 27.

† Isa. xlv. 27.

And what waters were they? salt or fresh? A bay of the Caspian, or the remains of the great Central Asian Sea, that geologists talk of? These are questions I am incapable of answering. I can only say that this Bay of Kaplan Kir was the fourth point of interest in my desert journey, and from its entire unlikeness to anything I had ever seen, it reconciled me to the fatigues of the way, and made me thankful to have been the first Englishman to gaze upon this remarkable scene.

Leaving Kaplan Kir, we next passed along a level elevation for about 7 miles, and then mounted to the highest part of the neighbouring hills, called Begendjalri Kir, where we came to another flat steppe, without bushes, and only a scrubby vegetation, in the midst of which we encamped at sunset. The direct path would have brought us along the hills to the pool Dungra, of bad, bitter, salt water, overgrown with reeds, 39 miles from Kum-sebshem. But this path, though shorter, was said to be trying to the camels' legs, and, rather than risk breaking them, our men, starting afresh at midnight, turned off the principal road about 13 miles short of Dungra, and brought us before sunrise on the 18th to the well Seikiz (or eighth) Khan, so named after the present Khivan ruler. Our route from the main road to the well, where we drew water, was 4 miles to the north-west; now it turned 19 miles towards the south-west to the well Tuar. At 10 o'clock we descended 200 feet into the bed of a river, or sea, with banks washed into various forms, apparently by the action of water. This brought us to a plain, bounded by distant cliffs. We then remounted to a higher land, 250 feet above the sea level, and camped, hoping on the morrow to attain to Tuar.

In certain respects our journey was rather more endurable here than on some portions of the way. The route was not quite so monotonous and lifeless, for we saw several game birds, and among them what

was called the Wild Hen. It is rather larger than a pigeon, runs very fast, and is shy. They get them near Krasnovodsk in the rocks, and sell them from 8*d.* to 10*d.* a brace. Marmots abounded, but not with the squirrel-like tails we had seen in Bokhara. On one occasion we stirred up a solitary Owl, and further on saw a few Jackdaws, but not many small birds. Once, too, we scared from her form a frightened Hare. The weather, moreover, now was perfection. My pocket thermometer in the sun stood at 75°, and the temperature was sufficiently warm to induce me, in riding by day, to throw off my great coat. I always slept, however, in the cradle in my furs, and was not much incommoded by cold, though my sheepskin hat and the furs about my face were unpleasantly wet.

But with all this I am bound to say our spirits were somewhat low. It was now our eleventh day since leaving Kunia Urgenj, and we had not yet come in sight of the Caspian. The novelty of camel travelling had worn off, and the journey promised to be longer than I anticipated. Things moved, as I thought, so slowly. When I left Samarkand, or soon after, I found that I had exhausted, or nearly so, all my books that I brought with me to read. Ordinarily in England, when going for only an hour's journey, I no more think of starting without something to read than without my purse, and I wondered how I should employ my thoughts on this long, slow journey. I cross-questioned Tailly severely whether some means could not be invented by which I might gallop on horseback the allotted day's journey, and have my tent put up so as to do some writing and arrangement of my notes, whilst the camels were walking on their leisurely way. But he said a horse could not carry the tent, and a camel could not keep up with the horse, so that he could contrive nothing. Preparation, therefore, for literary work seemed out of the question.

The idea occurred to me, however, that I might

glance through my pocket-Bible, and mark therein all the passages on which light or illustration could be thrown from incidents in my 10 years' travels. The print of my Bible was too small, and the shaking of the camel too great, to allow of my doing much in the cradle, but I often adopted another plan. I galloped forward a good distance in front of the caravan, to some herbage if possible that Diotrephes could crop, and then, whilst he was nibbling, I sat reading till the caravan had come up and passed, and was nearly out of sight, by which time my horse was impatient to catch it up again. By thus economizing my time, and using up odd moments, I managed to glance through the Old and New Testaments, and marked therein more than 500 passages.

But besides the weariness of mind incident to such slow travelling, the fatigue of body was not small, and the lack of ordinary domestic comforts began to be very trying. Our clothes had not been off for a long time—and as for a good wash, how was it possible with water at such a premium, that between the wells I had to look sharply after the men, or they refrained from giving enough to the horses? A pint and a half or a quart of water in my india-rubber basin had to be sponged over my face and neck before dinner, then to serve for the hands, and my ablutions for the day were over! Sevier, one evening, looked at the matter philosophically, and calmly debated whether under such circumstances it was worth while to wash at all, which certainly our men did not do the whole time we were with them.

Then there was the crawling about our tent on all fours, like quadrupeds, rather than standing erect as lords of creation, to say nothing of soup in wooden bowls, tea made out of brackish water that occasionally curdled the cream, and sundry other inconveniences not nice to mention. These things had to be encountered before lying down, after which, if the horses

did not fight, or the men make a noise, we managed to get perhaps four or five hours' sleep, till my alarm warned me I must stir up the men, or who could say when we should start, or whether we should not have our provisions run out before the end of our journey?

A revival of our hopes awaited us on the morrow. We did not start till five from the depression, wherein is situated the well Tuar, nor did we take water there. It was found by the Russian doctor and engineer to be black, though sweet, and to increase the thirst, nor did boiling it, or the addition of lemon extract, improve it. At sunrise, or about seven o'clock, we mounted the Tuar hill, and so emerged from the marine or lacustrine bed wherein we had travelled. We then ascended the hill Sary Baba, 250 feet higher, when lo! we espied the blue waters of the Caspian! I doubt if the Greek soldiers, returning from their Asiatic campaigns, were more pleased with the sight of the Euxine than were we with the Kara-boghaz gulf, and like them we shouted, "The Sea! the Sea!" We were a long distance, however, from the end of our journey, and, on looking at my great map, I doubted if we should get to Krasnovodsk in three days as the men said we should. But it was a great refreshment to see the Caspian.

Our road now continued in a south-westerly direction, over hilly ground; but before we descended from the hill Sary Baba, to an altitude of 300 feet above the sea, we passed a Muhammadan tomb of one Arsariboa, killed in battle, I suppose with the Russians. There was a hero's flag-pole erected, and something like ornamentation round the grave, but no trace of any building near it. I thought it more like a Shaman Buriat than a Kirghese Muhammadan grave.

About noon, with the thermometer at 75°, we came to Porsu, called also, I think, Portokup, 19 miles from Tuar, and situated at the foot of the hills Togus-tepe. Here is a pond of rain-water. The pond is situated in a

hollow, approached by a narrow path, down which the deer descend to drink. Murad, knowing this, went forward, thinking to cut off the retreat of any that might be at the bottom, but he was not sharp enough. We saw a herd, perhaps a score in number, small, and of similar species to the one we had caught, which was, I believe, the ordinary Persian gazelle; but I do not think we saw any of the saiga antelope, a native of these regions. The natives call both kinds, I believe, "*Kaïk*," and as we saw the little creatures bounding away on our approach, it was not difficult to perceive the aptness of the simile which described the Gadites "as swift as the roes upon the mountains." Of Wild Asses we saw none, though a Wild Boar one night approached the caravan, and startled the horses.

At an hour after midnight we started on the 20th, and marched till 5 next evening—16 hours without a halt, at the end of which our horses, not to say ourselves, were exceedingly tired. The route lay over a steppe country, with occasional depressions, and the latter part was not without anxiety, for Murad lagged behind, and for many hours was out of sight, so that I began to think quite seriously what legal responsibilities I might be involved in for not going back to search, if I arrived at Krasnovodsk without him.

The fact was, he had loitered behind and gone to sleep, having probably first muddled his torpid brains by long whiffs from his *kalian* pipe. This smoking instrument usually has a long stem from the gourd which holds the water; but our men appeared to have made a travelling pipe (such as could be slung in a bag on the camel), omitting the long accessories. At first they took the liberty of stopping the caravan, in order to light up their pipe and take a whiff, "turn about."

But this had one disagreeable result with the camels, and demoralized them, in that, rather than stand still, they took it into their heads to lie down suddenly, which sometimes snapped the ropes, and brought

about other inconveniences. Further, when I was in the cradle, my nostrils were defiled with the smell of their coarse, common tobacco, which I abominate, and I bade them not stop the caravan, and gave orders that, if they must smoke, the lighting of the pipe should be entrusted to one of the two men who were not leading the camels.

It consequently often fell to Murad's lot; and after the others had taken their one or two long whiffs, Murad would take the kalia and lag behind to finish the pipe. I imagine the fumes had on this occasion soothed him into 40 winks, from which he did not wake apparently for some hours, though at last he sneaked up like a naughty child, as we came to a halt, and, without saying a word, proceeded to put up the tent. No doubt he was very tired, like the rest of us.

I had by this time come to the conclusion that never before in my life had I been so weary of a journey as this. Crossing America by railway was a mere bagatelle in comparison, nor could I say otherwise even of traversing the Siberian expanse. Our last pheasant had been eaten the night before, and we had only one chicken left. Of the 8 we purchased, 2 died, and 3 were lost, stolen, or strayed. One or two "came to table" minus a leg, sauced with the excuse that it had been maimed on the way—the truth being, I suppose, that Murad had taken the absent member from the pot. One night he told Rosy to put more water to the soup. "For then, don't you see," said he, "*we* shall get more?" Our butcher's meat had long since vanished. The men had eaten it all, and the captured venison I tasted only once. It had become rather too high, though why I know not, so that too was transferred for the benefit of their "braxy" appetites, as well as our pickings, and the teapot with sugar. Hence, by comparison with their sack of flour and nothing else, they were faring sumptuously every day, and Murad's not wishing to hurry was understandable.

Meanwhile Sevier and I were ardently longing for the end of the journey, when we might take off our clothes again, and once more perform some very necessary ablutions. At the same time I am bound to say I gained an idea of tent life and Eastern travel, and saw exemplifications of Oriental customs, for which, as a Bible student, I shall always be thankful.* We encamped on the 20th at the well of Demerdjan, near some conical hills of the same name. At this place we took water for the last time, and found it so salt as to curdle our Swiss milk, though earlier in the season it is said to be slightly bitter, but good. Here we struck the main route between Krasnovodsk and

* Thus, over how much land we passed where it was as if the decree had been pronounced, "The land shall be utterly emptied and utterly spoiled" (Isa. xxiv. 3). "The whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein" (Deut. xxix. 23). I could never before understand so vividly the expression of Moses concerning "all that great and terrible wilderness" (Deut. i. 19), or how, in the desert, "the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way" (Numb. xxi. 4). Certainly, the passage in Hagar's life, when she wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba, with the same food only as taken by our men, with her water-bottle spent, and her child laid down to die (Gen. xxi. 14, 15), might have happened easily enough in the desert we crossed.

Of course, I had always been taught how wrong it was for the Israelites to murmur in the wilderness, and to long after the flesh-pots of Egypt, the cucumbers, and the leeks and onions, and melons (Numb. xi. 5). All this I had accepted without question in plentiful England; but when, in the Aralo-Caspian, our last melon was gone, I could not help thinking that, if the melons of Egypt were as good as those from Khiva, their longing was very much like human nature, whether B.C. or A.D.

So, again, this journey made me familiar with more incidents and necessities of travel of which I knew before only by reading, as "the camel's furniture" upon which Rachel sat (Gen. xxxi. 34)—great pack-saddles which, in our case, the animals wore as we did our clothes, without their being taken off. The action of one of Joseph's brethren, who opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn (Gen. xlii. 27), was precisely what we had to do nightly; and after seeing the coarse stuff eaten by the camels, and the inferior herbage given to Central Asian cattle, I understood better than before the prosperity implied in Isa. xxx. 24, when the oxen and young asses were to eat clean provender which had been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan. No doubt many of these things are simple enough to Western readers already, and they do not perhaps need much illustration, but I can never now read these passages without my thoughts going back to my journey.

Mangyshlak; and as this was one of the wells at which Murad had once been robbed of a camel, he suggested that someone should watch against the Tekke Turkomans whilst the others slept.*

We did not rest long, however, for at one o'clock in the morning we started again, and continued all day on the 21st, till sunset, over a steppe country with the accustomed coarse vegetation. On the previous day I had seen the cast skin of a hedgehog, and now I found on the steppe several shells of tortoises. The latter were interesting, because we were attempting to carry two of the like in a comatose state to the Zoological Gardens of London.

They were given to me in Tashkend by M. Oshanin, who expected them to sustain the journey without food, founding his opinion concerning the extraordinary vitality of the animal upon what M. Bogdanoff had previously done when he sent a tortoise in a box by slow transport at the end of May from Petro-Alexandrovsk to Petersburg. The box went to Kazan by mistake, and did not reach Petersburg till the middle of November, but the animal was alive and well, having eaten nothing apparently for 7 months.

In the present case, two were placed in a box with a little hay, and the box put on the seat of the tarantass. We constantly heard them scratching, as if desirous of making their winter bed, and before we had advanced far on our journey they appeared to have gone to sleep. Crossing the desert I trembled for their slumbers, for the shaking they were getting on the camel was enough, one would think, to wake the dead. How long they lived I do not exactly know, since it was not till we looked at them as we approached Odessa that they were found to have departed this life—victims, alas! of the spirit of enterprise, and I

* Reminding one of "those that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water" (Judges v. 11).

had no spirit of an alcoholic character wherein to preserve their remains.*

At nine o'clock in the morning we arrived at Suili, with 11 deep wells of bad, bitter water, and near to each a tank, about 7 feet long by 4 wide, hewn out of the limestone. Here, too, is a cemetery, but we did not stay, hoping to get to Krasnovodsk on the morrow.

Approaching the Caspian, our guides pointed out a shepherd's tent, or hut, put together in the clumsiest fashion, in which, like the shepherds of Bethlehem, they spend many weeks, day and night, watching their flocks.†

By sunset, however, we had seen no one. We stopped for two hours to eat, but did not sleep, because Sevier thought he had seen that the steamer left for Baku on the evening of the following day. So we pushed on, the night being unusually temperate, so that my fur clothing, as I lay in the cradle, became inconveniently warm. About 2 o'clock on the morning of the 22nd we had to "turn out of bed" whilst the camels descended a ramp from a cliff 200 feet deep into the plain, and afterwards, an hour or two before daylight, our men stopped for fear of losing their way.

We breakfasted as usual, in all its discomfort and awkwardness, on the camel's back; and as our bread was now 24 days old, I thought we could adopt the

* An officer at Samarkand had gravely assured me that it would be absolutely necessary to mix "a little red wine" with the desert water as a corrective for health's sake; but I did nothing of the kind. I have often met with the idea that, when travelling abroad, it is advisable to put wine in drinking-water as a precaution. My experience, however, which may go for what it is worth, is quite in the opposite direction. I have been an abstainer from alcoholic drinks for about a quarter of a century. In the summers of eight years I must have travelled from sixty to seventy thousand miles, generally rapidly, round the world, through Central Asia, and to all the capitals of Europe except Oporto and Madrid. Ordinarily I have used no filter, nor taken any special precautions (Bokhara excepted), and, I am thankful to say, have never suffered in consequence. Judging, therefore, from my own case, my opinion is that, when travelling, persons in ordinary health need not fear to drink the water in common use.

† Cant. i. 8; Luke ii. 8.

language of the Gibeonites to Joshua (ix. 12, 13): "This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth . . . but now, behold, it is dry and it is mouldy"; to which we could also add, "These our garments . . . are become old by reason of the very long journey." Both were true, and the latter especially of Sevier, concerning whom I must tell no tales; but his riding all the way on a wooden saddle (now preserved for coming generations in the British Museum) had played terrible havoc with his pantaloons, so that I doubt if any dealer in "old clo'" would have bid for them other than as curiosities of travel. Neither of us, thanks to the toughening of our hides, had suffered from what the doctors call "abrasion of the epidermis," which was more to Sevier's credit than mine, since it was his first attempt at horsemanship.

After breakfast on this eventful morning, I was lying idly in the cradle, when two natives appeared, the first we had seen for 12 days. They were Turkomans, but apparently not robbers; and whilst I was taking stock of them Sevier bade me look round. I did so, and there, from the top of a hill, at half-past 10 o'clock, I looked down upon Krasnovodsk. My sense of relief was great, and if ever words came from the heart, it was then as I exclaimed, "Thank God!"

I felt that we had something to thank Him for. We had travelled in safety over 400 miles of country where many a man has been murdered or enslaved; at the mercy of our native attendants, who might easily have played us false; unhindered by mishap to man, horse, or camel—save in the case of Rosy—whilst, in my own case, I had not been constrained so much as to open my pill-box. But with all that, it had been the most trying journey of my life. My horse had become thin, and so had I; and thankful as I am to have taken the journey once, I wish, unless duty calls thereto, never to take such another.

CHAPTER XLII.

FROM KRASNOVODSK HOMEWARDS.

Descent into Krasnovodsk.—Hospitality of the Commandant.—Dismissal of native attendants.—Our rate of travel.—Visit to Merv abandoned.—O'Donovan and his letter to Author.—The Scriptures in Turkmenia.—Alikhanoff, Naziroff, and Lessar in Merv.—Conversation thereon with Khan of Khiva.—Annexation of Merv by Russia.—Russia's mission of civilization.—The town of Krasnovodsk, and its scanty supplies.—Visit to a Turkoman *oba*.—Turkoman women and jewellery; their occupations and food.—Armenian trading.—Passage across the Caspian.—Baku and its oil.—From Baku to Tiflis in a horse-box.—Bible distribution from Tiflis.—Scenery at Batoum.—Voyage to Odessa.—Summary of journey, and farewell.

KRASNOVODSK was in a measure familiar to me by name, from its frequent recurrence in Trans-Caspian affairs, and I had expected to find it of urban proportions. The part we looked down upon, however, on the memorable morning of the 22nd November, reminded me rather of an English coast-guard station, with a miniature pier alongside. But in truth we viewed it from a considerable height, for Krasnovodsk lies on an arid flat below towering rocky cliffs, down whose precipitous scarp we were to crawl by a sinuous path, somewhat similar to that by which I descended into the Yo-Semite valley. The camels would have to be led slowly, and as we were under the impression that the steamer we could see at the pier was to leave that morning, there was no time to lose; so I suggested that Sevier should come with the

camels, whilst I trotted forward to act the postman in delivering the Governor's letter.

I think Diotrephe was pleased to get back to human habitations, for, tired as he was, he galloped famously towards the fort, though it required all my horsemanship, especially as I had lost my whip, to induce him to step over some tram rails that were new to him. Wishing to give the poor animal a drink of good water at the first moment possible, I rode into the yard behind the Commandant's house; but I fear I cut a sorry figure, for my unkempt appearance and few words of Russian elicited only scanty deference from the orderly I addressed.

I made my way into the office of Colonel Charitonoff, but found no French-speaking clerk to whom I could communicate who I was and whence I hailed, nor could I do much better with the Colonel himself till Sevier arrived, though my letters immediately secured me hospitality. This, we were given to understand, would have awaited us, whether we had letters or not.

The camels were led into the yard, and the patient, soft-eyed creatures knelt for the last time to be relieved of our burdens, after which, on dismissing the natives, I paid Rosy his balance, made Nazar a present of most of my equipment and remaining provisions for desert travel, and gave him a letter to General Grotenhielm, to return with the tent and barrels so kindly lent us. Afterwards, on telling the Colonel how long the journey had taken us from Kunia Urgenj—14 days to do 403 miles,—to our surprise he said that caravans following the same route usually took 20 days, and I have recently been informed that Dr. Van Norden was 25 days on the road from Krasnovodsk to the Khivan border. The *Times* correspondent with the Afghan Frontier Commission reported that the average rate of marching from Nushki to Kuhshan (770 miles), "including halts,

was over 15 miles a day," and he adds, "This, I think you will admit, is a very remarkable rate of marching." Since, therefore, our average, including halts, amounted to about double this rate throughout, I suppose I ought to have been more thankful than I was at the time.

We found that the smaller steamer, or rather tug and barge, had not ceased plying for the season between Krasnovodsk and the railway terminus at Mikhailovsk, as we feared at Petro-Alexandrovsk might be the case; for it must be borne in mind that, when one reads of the Trans-Caspian railway from Krasnovodsk, this is a figure of speech, and would-be travellers from the large steamers have to disembark at this place and be taken across the bay some 50 miles in a smaller craft, there being no other regular means of communication. Hence we were told we could have reached Kizil Arvat from Khiva in five days, and have come on to Mikhailovsk in a few hours. We should by this means have peeped into the Akhal oasis, where I was informed there were at that time between Krasnovodsk and Askhabad 10,000 rifles, about 2,000 cavalry, and 5 or 6 batteries of artillery.

Also, we should have been within 400 miles of Merv, but I had decided not to go thither, for I had already exceeded my limit as to time, and surveying officers were coming off the steppe, thereby implying that the season for outdoor work was over. I was told that I might be some time at Kizil Arvat before I found a suitable guide to take me a journey on which I might have to battle with the elements as well as the Turkomans; and, finally, I could not learn that, when I reached Merv, there would be anything special for me to see or do, since I had no more books to distribute. Could I have foreseen that it would be my last chance of seeing Merv under its native rulers, things might have appeared in a different light.

Of course, I remembered O'Donovan's dash into

Merv. His book was not ready, I think, when I left England, nor did I ever meet Mr. O'Donovan; but I wrote to ask him for useful hints. He afterwards perished with the army of Hicks Pasha in the Soudan; but his reply is before me, and I take pleasure in recording the kindness with which he sent me a letter of three sheets answering my questions.*

° Some parts of his letter are of sufficient general interest to warrant my printing them. He wrote from "Dinard, Ile et Vilaine, France, 17th June, 1882," and said:—

"The journey from the Caspian to Samarkand had best be commenced by rail from Krasnovodsk. The railroad is completed, I think, as far as Yengi Sheher, in the Akhal Tekke. Then you can procure horses and camels, and proceed either through Merv or Bokhara. I would recommend the route through Merv, especially if you can establish yourself in the good graces of the Russians, who by this time are doubtless all-powerful in that district. At this crisis, however, you will find it very difficult to persuade the Russians that your mission has nothing to do with politics.

"Between the eastern terminal of the Trans-Caspian railway and Samarkand I know of no way of travelling except by horses and camels. The people of the country, excepting when travelling in caravans, generally prefer horses. The only difficult piece of ground you will have to cross, if you proceed by way of Merv, is that between the Tejend and Murgab rivers, owing to its being in summer a waterless district. During the rainy season there will be abundance of water—too much of it sometimes.

"The language spoken by the people inhabiting the district between the Caspian, Merv, and the Oxus is primitive Turkish, bearing the same relation to the modern Osmanli spoken at Constantinople that the language of Chaucer does to our latter-day English. Should you be acquainted with Constantinople Turkish, you will acquire the Turkish of Central Asia in a very short time. If you have anyone with you who can speak Persian, you will get on well enough with the better classes of the community. Among the nomadic peoples, however, Turkish will be absolutely necessary. . . .

"When I was at Merv, I bought from a Jewish merchant of the place, named Matthi, a copy of the New Testament¹ printed by one of the Bible Societies in the language of the nomadic Turkomans—Jagatai Tatar. I believe you can get any number of them in London, for it was there that the copy I saw was printed. For general distribution in Central Asia, the Scriptures printed in the Turkish of Azerbaijan

¹ O'Donovan's mention of the sale of the Scriptures by a Jew is noteworthy, for Colonel Stewart told me that, whilst on the Turkoman border, he met with a Jew who was not only selling the New Testament, but had read it, and to such purpose that, quite apart from Christian teaching, he had become convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, and he asked Colonel Stewart for directions as to how he might carry out his desire to become a Christian—an incident from which I drew hope that the reading of my distributed Bibles, though unaccompanied by human teaching, will, with God's blessing, produce like fruits.

O'Donovan was followed into Merv by Alikhanoff and another disguised officer, Lieutenant Naziroff, of whose successful ride from Askhabad through Merv to Charjui I first heard on the 20th September, at the dinner-table of the Governor-General at Tashkend. I had asked about the possibility of my proceeding from Charjui to Merv, but the Russian authorities said it would be madness for me to attempt it, for that they regarded the journey just accomplished by Naziroff, who was an Asiatic speaking the language, as no small feat, and that they had no means of guaranteeing my safety beyond Charjui.

This information was volunteered to me in Tashkend without reserve, and further particulars were given me at Samarkand, when writing notes.*

Besides these last two officers, it appears that M. Lessar also went to Merv, and from thence to Khiva, (West Caspian provinces), and which resembles as nearly as possible the language of Bokhara, would be requisite.¹

"The dangers of travel in Central Asia have been, since the time I travelled there, immensely lessened by the Russian advance. They consisted principally of the attacks upon the caravans crossing between Krasnovodsk and Khiva or Bokhara by the Akhal or Merv Turkomans. In travelling by caravan at present, however, I should say there was no danger. Small parties of nomadic shepherds, who occasionally take to the road, as chance offers, do not dare to attack any considerable number."

* A portion of a private letter from a high functionary to another of nearly equal rank was read to me, and to this effect: "You know that Naziroff passed safely from Meshed through Merv to Bokhara in native costume, and, knowing the language and customs, went with a caravan together with Turkoman pilgrims returning from Mecca. There were many, and from different districts. Not knowing that he was a Russian officer, they were open with him, and told him that they would like to be in the Zarafshan province, where the authorities cared for the people, entered into their needs, and do not wrong them; but they did not make the same remark about the other provinces."

¹ Mr. O'Donovan is, I think, not quite accurate in some of his remarks about the Scriptures. The Gospel of St. Matthew, known as Bassett's version, has been printed in Jagatai Tatar, by the British and Foreign Bible Society, but the remainder of the New Testament has not yet been translated, and I have heard nothing elsewhere to lead me to suppose that the Turkish of Azerbaijan would be better for the khanates than Jagatai. In fact, Dr. Van Norden, writing from Khiva, speaks of the Kirghese New Testament he met with there as "about the same as the people speak in Khiva." Again, "The language spoken here, though Turkish, is quite different from that spoken in the Caucasus."

and back again to Kizil Arvat.* These visits helped no doubt to prepare the way for the submission of the Mervis, which was precisely what might have been expected. Coming events had been casting numerous shadows before them. Ever since the reign of Peter, certain families of Turkomans had from time to time seen it to be to their advantage to place themselves under Russian authority. Internal dissensions caused the Kirghese to do the same, till one horde after another was absorbed. So with the Turkomans, amongst whom all writers agree in saying there was neither law nor order, and consequently no security for right against might. Before Russia conquered Khiva, the Mervis were, to a certain extent, under the Khan; and they evidently tried to cling to Khiva to the last.

In one of my interviews with the Khan, his Highness asked me to whom Herat belonged.

I replied, "To Afghanistan."

Then he asked whether Merv belonged to Russia or to England.

I said that it belonged to neither, but was supposed to be independent.

"Once," he said, "it was independent, but the Khivans took it 60 years ago," and it was only on the coming of the Russians that their allegiance had been disturbed, but that lately the Mervis had sent to him wishing to pay taxes, and he had sent a man to receive them. Accordingly he argued that Merv belonged to him, and as he belonged to Russia, Merv must belong to Russia too. This was a logical sequence,

* Since I wrote thus, M. Lessar has told me that he went openly in Russian uniform in August and November, 1882, and was both times well received by the Mervis. From Merv he went to the Amu-daria, near Charjui, to Khiva, and thence to Durun in Akhal (published in the *Proceedings of the Russian Geographical Society*, and in Petermann's *Mittheilungen*). On comparing notes as fellow-travellers over the same steppe, I found that M. Lessar's journeys had been more arduous than mine; for that, whilst my party had never more than three days' journey without coming to a well, M. Lessar sometimes went five days and six, so that in one case, if not more, his horses died.

from which there was no escaping, and, therefore, I laughingly replied that if his Majesty had no objection I had none.

A few days later we met an intelligent native, who confirmed, in a measure, the foregoing by saying that two years previously (1880) a hundred men from Merv came to the Khan asking him to rule them. The Khan received them, and gave them presents, and, like a good vassal, sent them on to the Russian authorities at Petro-Alexandrovsk, by whom they were also well received. The deputation then, returning to Khiva, showed their true character by robbing the Sart inhabitants and making off. In the following year they deputed others to ask pardon; and before this the Khan had sent a representative, but up to the time of our conversation the Mervis had paid no taxes.

This was at the beginning of November, 1882, and I afterwards learned from a paper by the Baron Benoist-Méchin, that at the beginning of May—just six months later—another embassy came from Merv under Kara-Kul-Khan, chief of the Begs. This chief, says the Baron, had heard of the intended coming of General Chernaieff to Khiva, and had set out to meet him. He wished to obtain from him a delegated Khivan to govern the turbulent Tekkes. The envoy was appointed, and the two Frenchmen travelled with him to Merv. And what was his reception?

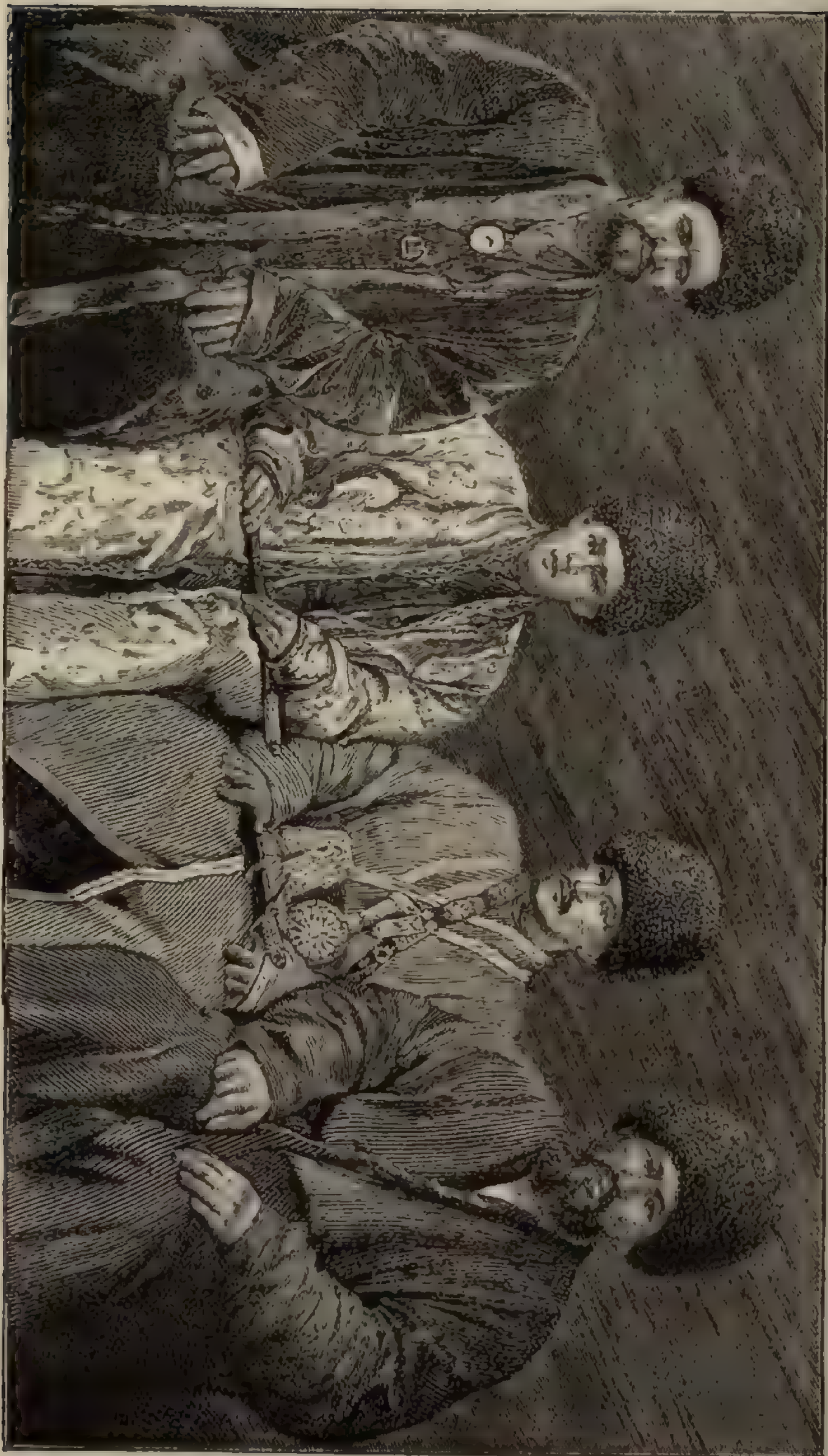
The Baron says: "Kara-Kul-Khan was, at the time of our stay at Merv, the strongest and most renowned chief in the country. He had acquired great notoriety by his forays and his expeditions before becoming a political chief. His raids were celebrated in all the steppe, and even Khiva had seen him beneath her walls. In spite of the popularity he enjoyed, however, he was far from obtaining from his people absolute obedience; and when Kara-Kul-Khan wished to instal their newly-imported governor from Khiva, he saw well

that this fresh attempt at government would quickly share the fate of others. Discouraged, and in despair, he came to tell us he saw well that nothing but Russian bayonets would bring such a turbulent population to reason, and went so far as to speak of his countrymen as robbers and brigands.

"This conversation, among others we had with him and with other Turkomans, witnessed to so great a laxity in the existing state of things, and to such a lack of any government whatever, that, after our arrival, in the month of July, we did not hesitate to write to General Chernaieff, it seemed to us that the Merv oasis would submit without fighting at no distant date." Within six months it had come to pass, and the Russian *Official Messenger*, February 2nd (14th), published the following telegram, addressed to the Emperor by General Komaroff, chief of the Trans-Caspian region, dated 31st January (o.s.) :—

"I am happy to inform your Majesty that an assembly held this day at Askhabad, of the Khans of the four Turkoman tribes of Merv, each one of them representing 2,000 tents, declared themselves unconditionally subjects of your Majesty, confirming the same upon solemn oath taken on behalf of their own selves, and on behalf of all the people of Merv. This decision, according to the statement of the Khans and delegates, was arrived at by the Turkomans of Merv, because they were assured of their incapability of governing themselves, and were convinced that your Majesty's powerful government could alone establish and maintain order in Merv, and ensure its prosperity."

Here, then, is abundant scope for what Russia considers her mission of civilization! Nor is this a mere empty expression; for after seeing Bokhara and Khiva under Asiatic rulers, and Tashkend and Samarkand under Europeans, I should be false to my convictions if I withheld my opinion that the natives have been gainers by Russian conquest. Hence, now that Merv is annexed, if there are any who would rather see it revert to its old condition of lawlessness, slavery, and blood, I confess I am not one of the number; but what may be the bearing of this upon political questions, I leave to others more competent to decide.



THE FOUR KHANS WHO NEGOTIATED THE SURRENDER OF MERV.
(From a photograph lent by M. Lessart.)

But, to return, I was thankful to have reached Krasnovodsk across the desert, but I determined thence to turn my back upon Asia, and telegraphed to London, for 6*d.* a word, my return to civilization thus: "Arrived through Bokhara down Oxus and across Aralo-Caspian desert from Khiva—telegraph, if necessary, to Tiflis," to which place I had now to make my way as quickly as possible.

But it was not so easy to get across to Baku at a moment's notice. The summer steamers had ceased plying, and the boat we saw waiting was to proceed south to the Persian coast. We had time, therefore, to look about Krasnovodsk, which we soon voted a sorry place. In 1877, a correspondent of the *Golos* wrote:—"Krasnovodsk has now grown almost into a town, has become populous, and very animated"; but if so, it must have since come down in the world, for my note-book gives the population as only 400 Persians and Armenians, and 1,000 Russians, of whom 800 were military.

Besides this, I think I never saw a town for which nature had provided so scantily, and my non-strategic mind was puzzled to know why the Russians had built their fort in such a place, where the population, if left to their own resources, must speedily starve. There are no wells of good water, and they have, consequently, to distil it from the Caspian at the rate of 16,000 gallons a day. There are also two engines at Mikhailovsk for a similar purpose, one of which distils 260,000 gallons, and the other half this amount per diem, to be sent along the line to waterless places in the desert. Moreover, there was not a blade of grass to be seen. There was a solitary cow tethered before a bundle of hay, and a few bushes planted in what was meant to be a public garden, but I cannot recall the sight of a single tree throughout the place.

It might be said, in fact, of Krasnovodsk as of Tyre and Sidon, that "their country was nourished by the

king's *country*,"* for almost everything had to be brought from Baku, Astrabad, Astrakhan, or adjacent parts of the Caspian. Hence provisions were dear. They had no pheasants, as at Khiva; beef cost 3*d.* a pound, mutton 2½*d.*, and eggs from 4*s.* to 6*s.* a hundred. I purchased apples, medlars, and sweet lemons—the last, if not all, being imported from Astrabad. The lemons were very insipid, even to one just come from the desert, but the medlars were good.

One thing in which Krasnovodsk seemed to be rich was mineral oil in its various forms. About 30 miles distant is the island of Cheleken, where are said to be



TURKOMAN TENTS NEAR KRASNOVODSK ON THE SHORE OF THE CASPIAN.

3,000 springs of naphtha, that supply the fuel for the distilling engines. I was also informed of naphtha works on the Kizil Arvat line. Large supplies of mineral wax have been discovered on the north of the Little Balkans, for the carriage of which a branch line has been constructed. There is at Krasnovodsk a grotto of alabaster, and salt obtained from the islands and lakes is exported for about 6*s.* a ton.

The only other produce of the place I remember hearing of was fish, caught by Turkomans of the Shikh tribe, living by the sea, a mile or so outside the town. To visit their collection of tents gave us some-

* Acts xii. 20.

thing to do on the second afternoon of our stay. The Colonel provided us a native for interpreter and guide, and we galloped off to the oba. It was by no means a large one, and the cause was speedily to be traced to the horrible practices of the Tekkes, who had made a raid upon this tribe some time before, and taken from them nearly everything that was valuable.* The tribe was said to number 200 tents, of which there were about 70 in this neighbourhood. There were not many men at home, but, introduced by our guide, the women did not object to our entering the tents, and looking at what we pleased, including their own jewellery. Most of this latter was of silver, but in the first tent we entered the woman had a pair of gold earrings, for which she asked £10. Their bracelets were in the shape of the letter C, 2 inches wide, and perhaps a quarter of an inch thick, weighing, I suppose, up to half a pound. Some wore in the ears gold rings, 3 inches in diameter, for which they asked as much as £10, but I did not observe any worn in the nose. I bought of them some studs of native workmanship, a finger-ring, and a child's anklet.

The women showed us amulets worn round the neck, and valued in some cases up to £20. I observed a charm similar in character tied round the neck of the Turkoman camel we hired.

Besides the ornaments just mentioned I noticed silver tengas sewed in rows on babies' caps, and one young mother wore her hair in long braids behind, with dangling ornaments attached, whose tinkling could be heard as she moved about.

As to the occupation of the settled Turkomans, they

* Reminding one of the troublous times in Israel, when "there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in . . . and nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city" (2 Chron. xv. 5, 6)—a state of things with which Jeremiah (xlix. 29) was familiar when he prophesied, "Arise ye, go up to Kedar, and spoil the men of the East; their tents and their flocks shall they take away: they shall take to themselves their curtains, and all their vessels, and their camels."

nearly all engage in agriculture. Those I saw were chiefly fishermen, but some were engaged in the transport of goods by caravan. The carpets and felts made by the Turkoman women are well known. I saw some of the latter in various stages of manufacture. In one house in Krasnovodsk, tufts of coloured wool were strewed over a floor of reeds, previous to being wetted and pressed, and in a tent were three women kneeling, and pressing simultaneously upon a bundle of felt they



TURKOMAN WOMEN WITH SPINNING-WHEEL.

rolled to and fro over matting, whereon loose wool was laid, which, being wetted, stuck to and thickened the roll as it passed over. Some few of the Turkomans further south engage in sericulture, the wheels on which the women spin and wind their silk and cotton being of the clumsiest description.

The usual food of the Turkoman is unleavened bread, the dough being kneaded in a wooden trough or upon a dried skin, and then baked on the hearth by covering it up in wood embers, the simplest, surely, of

all methods of cooking, and such as I saw in full force amongst my attendants, crossing from Khiva. The Turkomans also eat meal with oil or clarified butter, and I saw in preparation another kind of food called *yarma*, consisting of bruised wheat and sour milk. Outside a tent stood a stone mortar full of wheat with a stone pestle for the purpose, they said, of cleaning the grain, but I suppose to bruise it also.*

In a third tent was a child amusing himself with a bird tied by a string.† We managed to purchase a few curiosities from these nomads; but the guide, seeing our bent, said he would take us to some Turkomans



THE FORTRESS AT KRASNOVODSK.

who were living in houses at Krasnovodsk. We therefore returned, and saw something of the town. The most striking object is the fortress on the seashore, a large rectangular space, enclosed on the three sides by a high, well-built, stone wall, and having within it the Government offices, officers' houses, and small barracks. The place gave one the idea of a

* This bruising of corn seemed to me to illustrate Prov. xxvii. 22, "Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle"; and, perhaps, Isa. xxviii. 28, "Bread corn is bruised."

† A child's plaything, as old as the time of Job (xli. 5), "Wilt thou play with him as with a bird?"; or, as Rénan translates:—

"Joueras-tu avec lui comme avec un passereau?
L'attacheras-tu avec un fil pour amuser tes enfants?"

depôt for stores, which are sometimes packed under the useful Kirghese kibitka, side by side with the less bulky Russian linen tent. Some of the boats on the shore I noticed were of very primitive make, with flat bottoms, and simply cut out of the trunk of a tree.

The Turkomans, Persians, and Armenians live without the fortress in flat-roofed, stone houses. Into some of these we were led through narrow passages, and shown a variety of massive but coarsely-made jewellery, chiefly in the form of amulets worn on the breast. We had an opportunity also during our stay of seeing



GOVERNOR'S HOUSE AND STORES AT KRASNOVODSK.

something of the keenness of the Armenians, who in commercial transactions outwit even the Jews. I intimated that I wished to sell my two horses, whereupon some Armenians came to offer me for them 50s. each. I deferred the immediate acceptance of the offer, thinking I might have further need of them, whereupon the fellows came on the morning of the day I was leaving to say that they could give now only 40s. each; but rather than be taken advantage of thus, and remembering that I might need them in

Baku, I determined to take them across the Caspian. Rosy and Nazar called the day after our arrival, to say that they had secured some freight for a homeward passage, and nominally to bid us good-bye, but hinting also that a little more sugar, etc., would be acceptable. On giving it, I enjoined upon Nazar to take care of the letter to the Governor, upon which he swore in Oriental fashion, pointing to his head,* and set off to recross the desert.

We started on the evening of the 24th. I brought my baggage and steeds on board the *Kumo*, bound for Baku, and it seemed to savour somewhat of home when I found that the boat was built in London, and had done service first on the coast of Finland, and subsequently had been brought *via* Petersburg, through the canals to the Volga, and so into the Caspian. The first mate, too, though a Russian baron, had been in English service, and I was glad to hear him speak the English tongue. Several engineers, who had been engaged in surveying about Askhabad, were on board, one of whom had met O'Donovan. Indeed, I met two or three Russian officers who knew this hero of Merv.

We had to wait for the arrival of the ferry-like boat tugged from Mikhailovsk, full of cattle and passengers, and it was not until two in the morning that we started. We were at sea all next day, making a smooth passage of 190 miles, and landed at Baku early on the morning of the 26th. The long and sometimes robber-haunted post-road from Tiflis had prevented me in 1880 from travelling to see the "eternal fires" of Baku, and I was devoutly hoping that the railway would now be opened, so as to obviate the disagreeables of about 400 miles' journey by telega.

We went to Dominique's Hotel "Italia," and found that a train was to start in two days, but that tickets were not purchasable, and that it was difficult to obtain

* "Neither shalt thou swear by thy head" (Matt. v. 36).

a pass. My way, moreover, was not made smother from the fact that some Englishmen who had preceded me had had the bad taste to accept a free passage, and then to write to the papers complaining of the slowness of the administration. I went, however, to Baron Hübsch, the Governor, and, having presented my credentials, was told that matters should be arranged. Monday was now left to visit the oil-wells at Balakhane, and the monastery of the fire-worshippers at Surakhane. The latter is empty, the last priest, I heard, having contracted a habit of paying less attention to fire than to fire-water.

On Tuesday we arrived at the Baku station, as directed, at noon, with rather more than a quarter of a ton of luggage, in 19 parcels, but we did not start till half-past six; and as we were packed in a third-class carriage, with a crowd of all sorts and conditions of men, women, and children, some of whom smoked, and others snored, I cannot pretend that I slept well the first night. Better by far to have been in my tent in the wilderness! Improvements awaited me, however, next morning, for among the passengers to whom I had been introduced was M. Immanuel Nobel, a son of the "oil king" in these parts, and his local influence had secured for him the luxury of a horse-box! This he invited me to share, so that we were now in clover, having in common our provisions and tea-pot.

The time expended on the 350 miles was nearly as long as it took me to cross America, because we sometimes had to halt for an engine that had met with an accident, or for a ballast train to be unloaded; but with all this the journey was not longer, and was more comfortable, not to add more economical, than if we had travelled by post. I was very thankful, therefore, for the convenience when on the Saturday morning early we were awakened with the intelligence that we had arrived at Tiflis.

Here I made my way to the depôt of the British and Foreign Bible Society, where a letter had been received only the night before from the Government authorities respecting a request I made to the Grand Duke Michael in 1880 to be allowed to place New Testaments in the prisons and hospitals of the Caucasus, so that every prisoner and hospital patient might have at hand a copy in his own language. His Imperial Highness had granted my request at once, and 12 months afterwards information had been sent me in England that, to carry out the scheme, 1,910 copies would be needed in the Russ, Polish, Armenian, Grusinian, Tatar, Turkish, Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, Greek, German, Italian and French languages. The Committee had kindly made the grant, and the letter just arrived was to indicate where the books would be placed, and to whom they should be sent. All, therefore, seemed to be proceeding correctly, though not very rapidly, and there was nothing for me to do in the matter but to wish the local agent God-speed in his work, and get forward to the Euxine.

I had telegraphed from Baku that my money should be sent from Tashkend to Tiflis, and this, after some little difficulty, I managed to get on the Saturday. Speaking of money, I may add that I made the acquaintance of Herr Bayern, a naturalist and antiquarian, who had a magnificent collection of coins, and who, when I showed him my few, congratulated me on having secured some from Central Asia, both rare and valuable.

We left Tiflis on December 4th, and, arriving that night at Poti, opened our umbrellas for the first time since the previous 17th of August. The weather, however, was now broken, and on going next day to Batoum we had to wait there because of storms in the north of the Black Sea, before we could start for Odessa. Our delay, however, was much brightened by the kindness and attention of Mr. Peacock, in

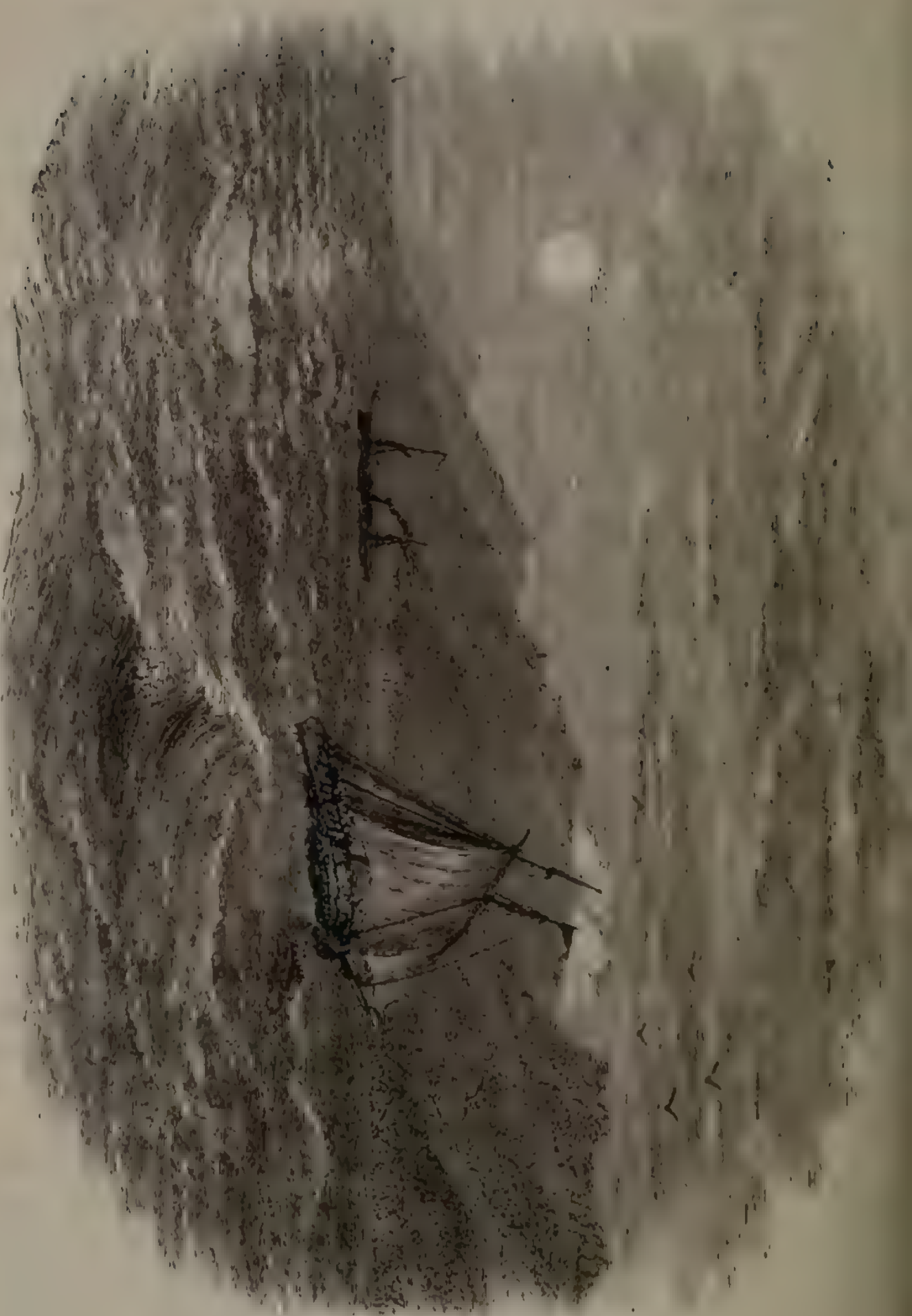
having obtained whose services as Vice-Consul Her Majesty's Government may think themselves fortunate. He knows the Caucasus thoroughly, and speaks I dare not say how many of its tongues. Oddly enough, I had met his brother at Krasnoiarsk, in Siberia, and my portrait had already preceded me to the Consulate, as one of a party returned from a Siberian gold mine.

We had a fine view from Batoum of the North Caucasian chain of mountains, snow-capped all along, with the two peaks of Mount Elburz standing above the rest; and when, after leaving Batoum, we came opposite Sukum, I was specially interested in the view, because I am fortunate enough to possess an oil-painting by the celebrated Russian sea painter, Aivazovsky, "Off Sukum Kali," that was given me by the artist when he made his *début* in London, in 1881.

Our steamer was the *Puschkin*, the finest for its size I have ever travelled in. The captain had been ordered, however, by telegram, to call at all the ports round the eastern coast, so that our progress was not rapid, though it gave us an opportunity of seeing something of Kertch and Sevastopol, which latter I had visited before. At length, on the morning of the 15th, we arrived at Odessa. Here I bade farewell to Mr. Sevier, to whose patience, perseverance, and efficiency not a little of my success was due. He was to go to Moscow; whilst I, that night, thanks to help received at our Consulate, entered the train for London, and arrived on December 21st.

Thus ended my journey of 12,000 miles, during which I was absent from England 179 days, and slept in my clothes half the nights. I was somewhat exhausted by the desert journey, but not so much as I have been by writing my books. I commenced them with the thought that, having acquired information possessed by no other Englishman living,

"OFF SUKUM KALI."
(From an oil painting by Airazovsky, in the possession of Mr. Lansdell.)



it was in a measure incumbent on me to offer it to the public. That duty I have attempted to fulfil, and now I leave the results in higher hands. As my going to Siberia was followed by that of other labourers in the same field, so it has been already in Central Asia; and if the publication of my works shall, by throwing light upon little-known parts of the world, tend in any way to their further evangelization and conquest for Christ, I shall deem that my labour and expenditure of time in writing are justified. I have then only to thank the reader who has had patience to follow me to the end, and to bid him a kind farewell!

THE AUTHOR'S ITINERARY.

The following shows the dates of the Author's departures and arrivals, and where described; the number of stationary and travelling days, with distances in miles traversed by rail, water, driving, and riding; also the numbers employed of horses, drivers, and camels.

DATES.	JOURNEYS AND WHERE DESCRIBED.	Page	Station-ary days	Travel-ling days	Rail.	Water.	Driving.	Riding.	Horses.	Drivers.	Camels.
June 26 to 29	London to Petersburg .	10	11	4	1,683	23	...	...	...	...	...
July 11 " 12	Petersburg to Moscow .	12	4	2	402	...	...	...	...	...	...
" 17 " 18	Moscow to Nijni-Novgorod .	...	...	2	273	...	...	...	...	...	...
" 18 " 29	Nijni-Novgorod to Perm .	15	...	5	...	952	...	...	...	...	...
" (19 " 25)	To the Interior and back	...	5	2	...	...	133	...	12	2	...
" 30 " 31	To Chusovaia and back	18	...	2	159	...	...	...	...	...	...
" 31 " Aug. 1	Perm to Ekaterineburg	24	...	1	312	...	...	...	...	...	...
Aug. 2 " 4	Ekaterineburg to Tiumen	24	5	3	...	...	204	...	37	12	...
" 10 " 17	Tiumen to Omsk .	30	1	8	...	979	...	...	...	...	...
" 19 " 23	Omsk to Semipolatsk	43	1	5	...	...	485	...	134	44	...
" 25 " Sept. 1	Semipolatsk to Kuldja	56	3	8	...	...	713	...	237	95	...
Sept. 5 " 8	Kuldja to Vierny .	110	2	4	...	...	301	...	82	28	...
" 11 " 15	Vierny to Tashkend .	157	5	5	...	...	530	...	228	76	...
" 21 " 23	Tashkend to Khokand .	193	1	3	...	...	176	...	39	13	...
" 25 " 28	Khokand to Samarkand	214	3	4	...	...	264	...	57	20	...
Oct. 2 " 3	Samarkand to Shahr-i-sabz	293	1	2	...	...	...	47	6	...	...
" 5 " 7	Shahr-i-sabz to Karshi .	323	1	3	...	...	...	77	6	...	...
" 9 " 11	Karshi to Bokhara .	330	4	3	...	...	91	...	18	6	...

DATES.	JOURNEYS AND WHERE DESCRIBED.	Station- ary days	Travel- ling days	Rail.	Water.	Driving.	Riding.	Horses	Drivers.	Camels.
Oct. 16 to 18	Bokhara to Charjui	...	3	...	...	35	48	36	31	2
" 19 " 26	Charjui to Pitniak	...	8	...	283	...	11	2	...	...
" 26	Pitniak to Petro-Alexandrovsk	3	1	...	...	...	27	2	...	...
" 30	Petro-Alexandrovsk to Khiva	1	1	...	...	...	40	2	...	...
Nov. 2 " 5	Khiva to Kunia Urgenj	2	4	...	...	...	107	2	...	...
" 8 " 22	Kunia Urgenj to Krasnovodsk	2	15	...	...	...	403	2	3	6
" 25 " 26	Krasnovodsk to Baku	...	2	...	190	...	...	...	...	...
" 27	Baku to Surakaneh and back	...	1	19	...	...	11	2	...	...
" 28 " Dec. 2	Baku to Tiflis	1	5	347	...	...	...	...	...	...
Dec. 4	Tiflis to Poti	1	1	193	...	...	...	...	...	...
" 6	Poti to Batoum	2	1	...	34	...	...	...	...	...
" 9 " 15	Batoum to Odessa	...	7	...	837	...	...	...	...	...
" 15 " 17	Odessa to Brody	...	2	457	...	...	...	...	...	...
" 17 " 18	Brody to Berlin	...	1	640	...	...	...	...	...	...
" 19	Berlin to Vlissingen	...	1	452	...	...	...	...	...	...
" 20	Vlissingen to Queenboro'	...	1	...	140	...	...	...	...	...
" 21	Queenboro' to Blackheath	...	1	67	...	...	...	...	...	...
		59	120	5,004	3,438	2,932	771	904	330	8

From the foregoing it will appear that the total distance travelled was 12,145 miles, of which were accomplished 5,004 by rail, 3,438 by water, 771 mounted on horse or camel, and 2,932 on wheels, by the hire of 904 horses and 330 drivers. Of the 179 days, 59 were stationary; thus leaving 120 days, during which there were covered on an average 101 miles a day.

APPENDIX

ON

THE DIPLOMACY AND DELIMITATION OF THE RUSSO-AFGHAN FRONTIER.

DIPLOMACY.

Mooted by Earl Clarendon, 1869.—Russia approaching India.—Neutral territory recommended and idea approved.—Afghanistan declined, but Upper Oxus proposed, as boundary.—To commence at Khoja Saleh.—Territory of Shere Ali Khan to be Afghanistan.—Boundary proposed from Sir-i-kul to Khoja Saleh, and districts on north-west frontier.—Questioned, but ultimately accepted, by Russia.—The situation in 1873.—Annexation of Khivan territory.—British apprehensions, and warning about Afghanistan.—Russian assurances against further extension.—Idea of an intermediate zone abandoned.—Russia's advance from the Caspian.—England's proposal as to delimitation of Perso-Russian frontier.—Request of Ameer of Afghanistan for a boundary map.—Demarcation of Afghan boundary desired.—Voluntary submission of Merv.—Remonstrance of England and Russia's reply, with proposal to demarcate from Khoja Saleh.—Accepted by England, and time and place of meeting suggested.—Russia suggests preliminary principles, objects to begin at Heri-Rud, and hints desire for Panjdeh and Paropamisus.—England's wish for Ameer's territory: Russia's for Turkoman lands.—Arrangements for departure of Commissioners.—Zelenoy taken ill and a "zone" of operations proposed.—Cossack advance to Pul-i-Khatun.—Russian proposal for negotiation of frontier in London.—Russian advance to Zulfikar and Panjdeh.—England's proposed "zone" rejected.—The Panjdeh fight and indifference of Ameer.—England's demand for a strategical frontier for her renunciation of Panjdeh.—Discussion on the Zulfikar Pass, and compromise.—A boundary negotiated in protocol.

DELIMITATION.

The Commission and boundary.—Zulfikar ford and pass.—First meeting, and site of first pillar.—Social festivities.—Survey parties starting eastwards.—Pillars to Sumba Karez and Hauz-i-Khan.—

Russian claims in the Kushk valley resisted.—From Hauz-i-Khan to Maruchak.—Difficulties about Panjdeh.—Weather, Christmas, and sport.—Sparsity of population.—Difficulties adjusted; delimitation recommenced, and frontier arranged nearly to the Oxus.—Fresh differences, and reference to Europe.—Demarcation continued to Daulatabad.—From Andkhui to Bosagha.—Survey of the Oxus banks, and withdrawal of Commissioners.—Where is Khoja Saleh?—Settlement at St. Petersburg.—Afghan losses and gains.—Results of delimitation: improved relations with, and greater knowledge of, Afghanistan.—Greater proximity of Russia.—Vulnerability of new frontier, and railway extension towards India.

DISCUSSION.

Sources of previous information imperfect.—Subject looked at:—

From a Russian standpoint.—English meddlesome, asking “intentions.”—Apprehensions on Khivan annexation.—Mr. Bull’s demands and interference.—Precipitancy of action after annexation of Merv.—Slowness in coming to terms.—Need of Russian wakefulness in delimitation.

From an English standpoint.—Russian advance to the Urals, the Irtysh, and Vierny.—Joining forces from Orenburg, in 1864.—Bokhara conquered.—Encroachments from the Caspian, and slowness in delimitation.—Dishonourable delay.

From a general standpoint.—Two nations squabbling for selfish ends over worthless territory.—The inhabitants, brigands.—Unconcern of England at Turkoman raids.—Thousands of slaves liberated under Russian rule.—Safety on Russian post-roads.—A railway provided.—Let not England be jealous of Russia.—Why not both be friends?

DIPLOMACY.

NEGOTIATIONS upon the boundary of Afghanistan appear to have been first mooted by the Earl of Clarendon, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, to Baron Brunnow, the Russian Ambassador in London, in 1869. Russia at that date was pushing forward her conquests in the direction of India. Russian Turkistan had been placed under the victorious General Kaufmann in 1867, and in the following year Bokhara was subdued. This brought Russian influence up to the banks of the Oxus, so that only Afghanistan remained, separating what might be regarded as Russia and India. Lord Clarendon, therefore, on several occasions pointed out in a friendly way to the Russian Ambassador how desirable it was that the amicable relations then existing between Russia and England should be maintained, and not interfered with by any possible disputes on the Indian frontier. To this end Lord Clarendon “earnestly recommended the recognition of some territory as neutral between the possessions of

England and Russia, which should be the limit of those possessions, and be scrupulously respected by both Powers."

Baron Brunnow having reported this to his Government at St. Petersburg, Prince Gortchakoff, the Russian Chancellor, replied that he had read the report with real pleasure, that the Emperor "looked upon Afghanistan as completely outside the sphere within which Russia might be called upon to exercise her influence"; and added that the idea of a neutral territory was quite in keeping with the Imperial mind. Further, Prince Gortchakoff was willing, on the suggestion of England, that Afghanistan should be the proposed neutral territory.

To this Lord Clarendon replied that, after consultation with the Secretary of State for India, he thought Afghanistan would not fulfil the necessary conditions, but he proposed that the Upper Oxus should be the boundary line which neither Power should permit their forces to cross.

In answer to a Russian inquiry as to the point on the Oxus from which the western boundary line should commence, it was stated from the India Office, on July 22nd, 1870, that "provided Khoja Saleh, which is at the passage of the Oxus, on the high road from Balkh to Bokhara, is admitted to be Afghan territory, Her Majesty's Government would not object to a definition of frontier by which the rights of Bokhara should be determined, to commence at a point upon the left bank of the Oxus immediately below that place."

This proposal was sent by the Russian Government to General Kaufmann, in Turkistan, for his observations thereon; the director of the Russian Asiatic Department remarking to Sir Andrew Buchanan, then English Ambassador at St. Petersburg, that probably no objection would be made to including Khoja Saleh within the Afghan frontier.

Meanwhile Lord Clarendon met Prince Gortchakoff at Heidelberg, when the Prince objected to the Oxus as a line of demarcation, because he said the Emir of Bokhara claimed certain territory south of the river. Later, however, during the visit of Mr. Forsyth to St. Petersburg, other communications followed, and these resulted in an understanding, among other matters, that no districts should be acknowledged as Afghan but such as had been under the rule of Dost Muhammad Khan, and "that the territory in the actual possession at the present moment of Shere Ali Khan should be considered to constitute the limits of Afghanistan." This was notified by Prince Gortchakoff to Baron Brunnow, November 1st, 1871.

No answer coming from Turkistan for about two years, Earl

Granville wrote to Lord Loftus, our Ambassador at St. Petersburg, stating that Her Majesty's Government, from evidence before them, considered as fully belonging to Afghanistan:—

1. Badakshan, with Wakhan, from Lake Sir-i-kul to the junction of the Kokcha river, with the Oxus forming the northern boundary of this province throughout.
2. Afghan Turkistan, comprising the districts of Kunduz, Khulm, and Balkh, the northern boundary of which would be the line of the Oxus from the junction of the Kokcha river to the post of the Khoja Saleh inclusive.
3. The internal districts of Akcha, Sir-i-pul, Maimana, Shibirghan, and Andkhui, the latter of which would be the extreme Afghan frontier possession to the north-west.
4. The western Afghan frontier between the dependencies of Herat and those of the Persian province of Khorassan is well known, and need not here be defined.

This statement was submitted to the Russian Government, and Prince Gortchakoff, after explaining the causes of delay in making the necessary investigations in Turkistan, said that the result of these investigations was in accordance with the opinion of the English Government so far as concerned the Oxus for a boundary between the Kokcha and Khoja Saleh. They had failed, however, to discover that Shere Ali Khan exercised actual sovereignty over Badakshan and Wakhan, and consequently doubted whether the claim to these provinces should be admitted. As for the boundaries on the north-west, starting from Khoja Saleh, information received threw doubt upon the Afghan possession of Akcha, Sir-i-pul, Maimana, Shibirghan, and Andkhui; but as these were separated from Bokhara by deserts and if the English Government adhered to its opinion as to the expediency of comprising these places in Afghan territory, "the Imperial Cabinet would be disposed, as far as this portion of the boundary is concerned, to accept the line laid down in Lord Granville's despatch."

The foregoing was written by Prince Gortchakoff on December 19th, 1872, and on the following 24th of January Her Majesty's Government, "relying upon the friendly feelings of the Emperor," laid before him afresh the grounds on which Shere Ali's claims were based, to which Prince Gortchakoff replied, a week later, that, according to Russian views, Badakshan and Wakhan enjoyed a certain independence; yet, not wishing to give too prominent importance to this detail, he added, "We do not refuse to accept the line of boundary laid down by England."

Thus, in 1873, the Upper Oxus from Sir-i-kul to Khoja Saleh

was recognized as a boundary, certain specified districts were admitted to belong to Afghanistan, whilst the western Afghan frontier between Herat and Khorassan was said to be well known. In addition to this agreement respecting a frontier, it was mutually understood that the two Powers should exercise their influence in preserving peace in districts intermediate to them, so that the coming in contact of England and Russia in Central Asia should, if possible, be avoided. (It should be remembered, however, that at this date both Russians and English were alike ignorant of the geography of the Upper Oxus, and what were really in those regions the Afghan possessions. The convention was made without even consulting the Ameer; so that the treaty frontier in both extreme East and West was of a very shadowy character.)

Meanwhile a Russian expedition against Khiva had been decided upon, which Russia thought it courteous to notify beforehand to the English Government. The object of the expedition was said to be the punishment of brigandage, and not the annexation of territory, though after the expedition Russia informed England that she had unexpectedly found herself obliged to construct a fort, and to annex a portion of the Steppe.

This aroused British apprehensions, and Lord Granville, on January 7th, 1874, "called the attention of the Imperial Government to the dangers that might result from the progress of Russia in Central Asia, to the balance of power which it had been endeavoured to establish in those countries by the understanding between the two Governments," and he stated "frankly, once for all, that the independence of Afghanistan was considered a matter of great importance for the welfare and security of British India and the tranquillity of Asia."

To this Prince Gortchakoff replied, on January 21st, that the Imperial Government persisted in considering Afghanistan as entirely outside its sphere of action; that if the two Governments would exercise their influence over the intermediate states, all promised well for the peace of Central Asia; whilst as for the Turkomans, whose turbulence Lord Granville had referred to, it would be only their own brigandage or misbehaviour that might cause them to be punished by Russia.

In keeping with the foregoing Prince Gortchakoff, in a despatch of March 24th following, informed Baron Brunnow that the Emperor had given peremptory orders "that no expedition should be undertaken against the Téké Turkomans, which means in the direction of Merv." This, too, was followed, on April 5th,

1875, by a long historical memorandum on the relation of the two Powers in Central Asia for communication to Her Majesty's Government, giving assurances as to the plans of Russia, and saying that "His Majesty had no intention of extending the frontiers of Russia, such as they exist at present in Central Asia, either on the side of Bokhara, or on the side of Krasnovodsk and of the Atrek," though Prince Gortchakoff added that the Russians would cause their frontier to be respected, and they would endeavour to extirpate brigandage. The Prince Chancellor further stated that the misapprehensions on the part of the British Government were entirely groundless; but at the same time he pointed out that Russia, having on several occasions spontaneously and amicably communicated to England her views with respect to Central Asia, and her resolve not to follow a policy of annexation, such statements must not be looked upon as if they were contracts and definite engagements.

This letter was not altogether pleasing to the India Office, whence Lord George Hamilton, on 22nd June, wrote to Lord Tenterden suggesting that England should claim a like liberty of action with Russia. Accordingly, on 25th October, Lord Derby wrote to Mr. Doria, at St. Petersburg, that "each successive advance of the Russian frontier towards Afghanistan may involve complications which it is equally in the interest of both England and Russia to avoid; that the integrity of Afghan territory was an object of highest importance to Her Majesty's Government, who must reserve to themselves complete liberty of action as to how they would secure it. They could not but feel that such an event, for instance, as the occupation of Merv might arouse the susceptibilities of the Ameer of Afghanistan, and involve the contact of the two Powers in Central Asia, which was the result both governments desired to avert. Her Majesty's Government, therefore, received with sincere satisfaction the assurances that such extension was contrary to Russian interests, and that orders had been given that future action in those regions was to be confined to the defence of existing limits, and the protection of property from brigandage."

In reply Prince Gortchakoff wrote to Count Schouvaloff, the Russian Ambassador in London, on 3/15 July, 1876, saying that His Majesty appreciated the breadth of view of Lord Derby's communication, and added, "We entirely agree in the conclusion that, while maintaining the arrangement concerning the limits of Afghanistan, which is to remain outside the sphere of Russian action, the two Cabinets should regard as terminated the discussion relative to the intermediate zone, which has been

recognized as unpractical; that while retaining entire freedom of action, they should be guided by a mutual desire to pay due regard to their respective interests, by avoiding, as far as possible, any immediate contact with each other, and any collision between the Asiatic States placed within the circle of their influence."

And here negotiations appear to have remained for the next six years, during which time Russia, in spite of all her protestations, was advancing step by step from the Caspian along the Persian border in the direction of Merv, so that on 30th December, 1881, Earl Granville telegraphed to Mr. Thomson, at Tehran, "Reports have appeared in one or two newspapers here that the Turkomans at Merv have surrendered to the Russians. Has any intelligence reached you to that effect?" Mr. Thomson replied in the negative, but added, "Communications appear to have lately passed between the Turkomans and Russians with a view to submission or arrangement for future good conduct of the tribes."

A month later, on 2nd February, 1882, the mind of the English public being somewhat disturbed, Earl Granville, in conversation with Prince Lobanow, the Russian Ambassador, remarked that the friendly relations then existing between the two countries offered a suitable opportunity of arriving at an understanding as to any question which was capable hereafter of becoming a subject of difference or suspicion. He suggested, accordingly, whether an agreement might not be come to respecting the policy of the two Powers in Asia, so as to remove the jealousy with which public opinion in England regarded the progress towards India of the Russian arms. The Clarendon-Gortchakoff agreement, though still binding, left certain details unsettled; and Lord Granville, having heard that the Russian Government had come to an agreement as to the frontier from the Caspian to Baba-Durmaz, suggested that an understanding should be come to between England, Russia, and Persia for the settlement and subsequent demarcation by Russian, Persian, and English officers, of the Perso-Russian frontier from Baba-Durmaz down to the point where the Russian frontier meets that of Afghanistan, in the neighbourhood of the Heri-Rud. He thought also that something might be done with regard to the adjacent Afghan frontier.

On 22nd February following, Prince Lobanow informed Earl Granville that the Russian Government acknowledged the continued validity of the Clarendon-Gortchakoff arrangement, "and they were ready to supplement it by a settlement of the

frontier of Afghanistan, from the point where it had been left undefined as far as Sarakhs."

But Lord Granville wrote, on 14th March, 1882, to Sir Edward Thornton, our Ambassador at St. Petersburg, that this proposal "did not in any way meet the requirements of the case." A meeting, therefore, was held eight days later, at the Foreign Office, between Earl Granville, Lord Hartington, and Prince Lobanow, to discuss the question, more particularly of the Russo-Persian frontier, in the course of which the Ambassador demurred to the interference of England between Persia and Russia, saying that Russia had never so interfered between England and Afghanistan. This question formed the subject of sundry despatches, when it was ultimately agreed that the Perso-Russian frontier should be delimited by a Persian and Russian Commission, though the work had not begun by 16th June, 1883, when the subject of the Perso-Russian as well as the Russo-Afghan frontiers was again brought into notice by the Ameer of Afghanistan having expressed to the Viceroy of India his desire for a map showing the boundaries between Afghanistan and Russia and Persia. The Viceroy replied that no proper map existed, a large part of the country being unsurveyed.

The Afghan frontier was again mentioned in an official despatch on the 4th August, 1883, by Mr. Thomson, who wrote from Tehran that in conversation with the Russian Minister there, M. Melnikoff expressed his opinion "that an important element of discord would be removed if the demarcation of the Afghan line of frontier from Khoja Salch to the Heri-Rud were agreed upon and speedily effected."

Then came the startling telegram from St. Petersburg, on 14th February, 1884, that "the khans and twenty-four representatives of the four tribes of the Merv Turkomans had presented themselves at Askhabad, had sworn allegiance to the Czar, and had expressed the hope that Russia would take charge of the government of their country"; and the same night M. de Giers informed Sir Edward Thornton that His Imperial Majesty had determined to accept the allegiance.

The eyes of England were just then turned to her military proceedings in Egypt and the Soudan, so that the annexation of Merv created less excitement in London than might otherwise have been expected. In a fortnight, however, on 29th February, 1884, was sent to Sir Edward Thornton a long historical memorandum of the correspondence between the two governments respecting the possibility of an eventual advance of Russia to

Merv, in which the uniform assurance of Russia to the apprehensions expressed by England had been that they had no intention of occupying Merv. "It seemed, therefore" (Lord Granville said), "entirely inconsistent with the whole tenor of the mutual explanations between the two governments that one of them should take a step which appears to be in contradiction with the assurances which have on so many occasions been received both from the Emperor and his Government, without any previous communication of their change of views."

To this M. de Giers replied on 17/29 March that, Russia having abstained from observations concerning the transactions by which England, at different periods, had extended her sphere of action along her Indian frontier, Russia had a right to expect the same consideration for the freedom of the decisions demanded by the interests of Russia. At the same time, the value the Russian Government attached to the maintenance of cordial relations with the Cabinet of London had always led them, when inquired of, to engage in friendly explanations; but these explanations had not been of the nature of engagements. The recent resolution of the Merv chiefs was a sudden one, nor was it yet decided how their submission would be carried out; but the Imperial Cabinet determined to respect, as in the past, all arrangements previously concluded between the two governments. M. de Giers then added, "In case the Cabinet of London should find it useful and practicable to complete these arrangements by a more exact definition of the condition of the countries which separate the Russian possessions from the boundaries of Afghanistan, we can only recall to them the proposal which the Ambassador of His Majesty the Emperor was ordered to make in 1882. That proposal was, to continue from Khoja Saleh westward the line of demarcation agreed upon in 1872-73." This letter was accompanied by a memorandum, saying, in reply to the charge that Russia had not communicated to England her change of views, that "the mission of the inhabitants of Merv was an event just as unexpected by us as by England," after which followed a succinct summary of the facts which had led to the said submission.

A month later, on April 29th, Earl Granville wrote to Sir Edward Thornton, "Her Majesty's Government are prepared to accept the proposal put forward in 1882, and now repeated by M. de Giers, for the delimitation of the frontier of Afghanistan from Khoja Saleh westwards," and added, "It would be desirable that the principal points of the boundary

line should be laid down on the spot, and that a joint Commission, including an Afghan representative, should be appointed for that purpose, and should commence operations next autumn."

M. de Giers replied, on 3/15 May, that "the Imperial Cabinet is quite ready to appoint a Commissioner, to visit, in company with his English colleague, the district to be delimited, and in concert with him to endeavour to ascertain the principles under which a frontier line might be traced which would satisfy the respective interests of the two Powers." As for the Afghan official, M. de Giers proposed that he should be attached to the Commission as an expert, but not as a Commissioner.

To this Lord Granville acceded, and on 17th June proposed "that the Commissioners should meet on the 1st October next, at Sarakhs, on the left bank of the Heri-Rud."

M. de Giers, on 18/30 June, saw no objection to this, but thought "it would be advisable that, previous to the sending of the Commissioners to the spot, the two governments should exchange views on the general basis of the future delimitation," and that Khoja Saleh should be the starting-point. Further despatches followed in favour of the Heri-Rud and Khoja Saleh respectively, until M. de Giers asked, on 28th July, as to the precise point on the Heri-Rud at which the boundary should begin, and "on what principles the instructions to the Commission should be framed, whether they should be based upon ethnographical, geographical, or topographical considerations, or on all three." From these and other questions it seemed to Sir Edward Thornton that M. de Giers thought that all the Turkoman tribes should be excluded from Afghanistan. Our Ambassador anticipated also that efforts would be made to place Panjdeh outside of Afghanistan, and to make the range of mountains, about thirty miles south of Panjdeh, the northern boundary in that part of the Ameer's dominions.

Lord Granville replied on the 5th August that "Her Majesty's Government have up to the present time considered that the territory of the Ameer of Afghanistan extended to a point on the Heri-Rud, in the neighbourhood of Sarakhs," and that "the primary duty of the Commission will be to ascertain the true limits of the Ameer's territory, and, therefore, in defining his jurisdiction, they must be guided by the political relations of the tribes which inhabit the country."

Within a week Sir Edward Thornton telegraphed that the Imperial Government wished to stipulate "that the whole of the

Saryk tribe of Turkomans, extending southwards from Yulutan to the Afghan posts along the frontier should be placed under the authority of Russia"; to which Lord Granville replied, on the 20th August, that Her Majesty's Government "cannot anticipate the decision of the Commission," and, three days later, he added that the instructions to Sir Peter Lumsden, the English Commissioner, had been drawn up, based upon the principles laid down on the 5th instant, and that Sir Peter would leave London early in September.

On the 7th September M. de Giers wrote to Sir Edward Thornton, that, notwithstanding the difference of opinion between the two governments as to the instructions to be given to the Commissioners, the Imperial Government did not wish to lose an opportunity of removing misunderstanding, and, accordingly, that Major General Zelenoy, the Russian Commissioner, would join Sir Peter Lumsden at Sarakhs, about the 13th of October. The Imperial Cabinet, however, was convinced that the proper basis for a line of boundary must be as far as possible in conformity with the ethnographical and geographical conditions of the country; "in the meantime, it is urgent that the Afghan authorities should be prevented from seeking to make territorial encroachments."

Accordingly Sir Peter Lumsden started *viâ* Tiflis and Tehran, and a British escort was advancing from India through Afghanistan, when it was found that neither could reach Sarakhs by the date arranged. Moreover, Sir Edward Thornton wrote, on the 3rd October, that General Zelenoy had been taken ill, also that M. de Giers, from information received concerning the climate, deemed it useless for the Commission to meet before the 15th January; moreover, the Russian Government, finding that there were objections to Sarakhs as a meeting place, thought some spot further south, such as Pul-i-Khatun, should be agreed upon, and the despatch added, "The principal objects of the work should be the survey and description of the zone within which the line of demarcation ought to be drawn."

To this Lord Granville replied that the Russian Government, having formally agreed to Sarakhs, Her Majesty's Government could not consent to any other place being named, and hoped that Russia would instruct her Commissioner to reach Sarakhs to begin work before winter set in.

Meanwhile, on the 14th October, Sir Edward Thornton wrote that General Zelenoy had visited him, and thought it would be very desirable that a certain zone should be agreed upon

between the two governments within which the Commissioners should be instructed to consider where the north-west boundary of Afghanistan might lie, and outside of which the Commissioners should not be allowed to extend their explorations. For instance, he added, "the zone might be between a line drawn from Sarakhs to Khoja Saleh which should be the limit to the north, and another from a point on the Heri-Rud far to the south of Sarakhs eastwards, and then northwards to Maimana, Andkhui, and Khoja Saleh."

Hearing this, Lord Granville expressed by telegraph, on the 30th October, the great disappointment of Her Majesty's Government at the postponement of General Zelenoy's departure.

On the next day, Sir Peter Lumsden telegraphed from Meshed the rumour that Cossacks had advanced to Pul-i-Khatun on the Heri-Rud, and to Pul-i-Khisti on the Murghab; and this was followed by another telegram from Sir Peter on the 10th November, after his arrival at Sarakhs, where the Russians, stating their advance to Pul-i-Khatun was precautionary, asked him on what grounds the Afghans, who heretofore had their outpost in Panjdeh, had moved forward twenty-four miles to Sari-Yazi.

Four days later Lord Granville telegraphed to Sir Peter that in answer to the Russians pressing for a preliminary understanding as to a zone of discussion, he had replied that the Commissioners alone could decide what should be the region of their inquiry, Sir Peter having beforehand to consult the Afghan official. Next, Lord Granville wrote, on the 20th November, to St. Petersburg, pressing for withdrawal of Russian troops to Sarakhs, and promising the retirement of the Afghan detachment, said to be gone to Sari-Yazi; but from Sir Edward Thornton's despatch of 27th November it appears that M. de Giers spoke of the troops at Pul-i-Khatun as "merely a very small advanced post, consisting of a few Cossacks, who had been sent there for the protection of the Salor Turkomans," who had returned to cultivate the land, and had appealed to the Russians for protection.

On the 9th December the Russian Ambassador called upon Earl Granville, alleging that "the population of Panjdeh had always enjoyed a complete independence," whereas the place had now been occupied by Afghans, and to this the Ambassador was instructed to call Lord Granville's very serious attention. A week later, however, a telegram came from Sir Peter Lumsden from Panjdeh, saying that the Afghan Government there was

fully established, and the stronghold strengthened, but that the outpost at Sari-Yazi was withdrawn.

The Russians then intimated, on the 17th December, that their Commissioner would probably remain at Tiflis until some arrangement had been arrived at concerning the zone of operations; to which Lord Granville replied, on the 23rd, to Baron de Staal, the Russian Ambassador in London, that England would accept the northern line proposed by Russia, but that it was undesirable to attempt any preliminary definition of the zone on the south. Lord Granville also observed that he did not regard Pul-i-Khatun and Panjdeh as outside Afghanistan.

And thus matters continued for a month, until on 28th January, 1885, M. de Giers proposed that their Ambassador in London "should negotiate with Lord Granville a line of boundary [beginning ten versts south of Zulfikar], which should be subsequently laid down by the Commission," adding that M. Lessar, an Engineer officer, would proceed to London on the morrow to help the Ambassador by furnishing local information.

Meanwhile troubles were arising in the territory in question. On the 10th February, 1885, the Russian Ambassador called at the Foreign Office with a reported rumour that a hundred and fifty Afghan cavalry had occupied Zulfikar, and that an Afghan post had been established at Sari-Yazi. Lord Granville telegraphed to Sir Peter Lumsden, who replied on 12th February that he heard "a Russian outpost of forty-five men from Pul-i-Khatun have advanced, and are now facing the Afghan outpost in Zulfikar Pass," adding, "Matters have come to a crisis by the simultaneous movements of Russia on Sunday last on the Murghab and the Heri-Rud," in explanation of which M. de Giers told Sir Edward Thornton, on 18th February, that the Russian General Komaroff heard that Afghan troops were advancing, and consequently that he had sent a small force in each direction, and found the report to be true. M. de Giers hoped, however, that a conflict would not take place unless the Russian party were attacked by the Afghans.

Returning to the negotiations: Earl Granville, on 13th March, forwarded to M. de Staal a proposal with a map, suggesting northern and southern limits of a zone to which the inquiries of the Commissioners should be restricted, promising also to instruct the English Commissioner to endeavour to come to an arrangement satisfactory to the two governments, and which Her Majesty's Government in consultation with the Ameer would be justified in accepting. Enclosed was a long memorandum

reviewing the whole question, and saying, "Her Majesty's Government cannot admit that the boundary should be marked in conformity with geographical and ethnographical conditions, to the exclusion of the question of territorial right or other considerations." Further, England could not accept the new proposal of a boundary from Zulfikar, because they thought it should begin at Shir Tepe, but that they were "prepared to agree that the lines which the two governments have respectively proposed should be taken as the limits of a zone to which the inquiries of the Commissioners shall be restricted."

An answer to the foregoing was received by Earl Granville on 1st April, stating that, if Her Majesty's Government wished to return to the idea of a zone of investigation, Russia could only accept the one she had proposed from the outset, and that it appeared more practical to assign to investigation the territories situated on the line last indicated to Her Majesty's Government. To this Earl Granville, on April 4th, replied to the Ambassador that for Russia to insist on her own proposal, and take no notice of ours, rendered it impossible for them to proceed on a basis which substantially denied the equal footing of the two Powers.

M. de Giers then proposed, on April 8th, another zone, starting on the north from below Pul-i-Khatun; and on the same day Sir Edward Thornton wrote that M. de Giers looked upon all the territory as far south as the Paropamisus range as now under the control of Russia, alleging that it had never been under the control of Afghanistan.

Meanwhile Lord Dufferin, Viceroy of India, and the Ameer of Afghanistan had met in conference at Rawul Pindi, when, on April 4th, the Ameer seemed indifferent as to the retention of Panjdeh; the localities to which he attached vital importance being Gulran, Maruchak, and the Pass of Zulfikar. Four days later, however, upon the news being communicated to him that the Russians had attacked Panjdeh, the Ameer declared his determination to resist invasion; and arms, and possibly money, were promised to him should war break out between England and Russia.

That such a calamity would happen seemed for a time imminent. Preparations had already quietly begun in England, and troops were concentrated on the north-west frontier of India. When the news arrived that on the 30th March the Russians had attacked and beaten the Afghans at Panjdeh, there was a panic on the Stock Exchange in London, and in anticipation of England going to war, the principal markets of the world,

especially American, were affected. Numerous despatches concerning the fight were exchanged between the Cabinets of London and St. Petersburg and the generals on the spot, with the result that each side accused the other of being the aggressor, so that it was agreed, on May 4th, to submit the matter to arbitration, and to resume negotiations in London.

An informal meeting had been held on April 14th between Earl Granville, Lord Kimberley, and M. Lessar, at which the Zulfikar Pass was claimed as a *sine quâ non* for Afghanistan, and it was remarked that the general principle upon which the line of frontier should be drawn should leave the passes in the possession of the Afghans, and secure to them a good strategical outline. Also it was hinted that if in this respect Russia met England fairly, the concession of Panjdeh was not impossible, to which the Cabinet of St. Petersburg telegraphed two days later to Baron de Staal, the Russian Ambassador, "You are authorised by the Emperor to reply, We see no objection to allowing the exchange of Panjdeh for Zulfikar, in which case the frontier would start from a point on the Heri-Rud, a little to the north of Zulfikar."

On the 4th May, Lord Kimberley telegraphed to the Viceroy of India that negotiations would be resumed, accepting an arrangement that would leave to the Ameer Zulfikar, Gulran, and Maruchak, and on the same day Earl Granville summoned home, to help in the negotiations, Sir Peter Lumsden and Colonel Stewart.

On May 8th, Earl Granville transmitted to St. Petersburg a proposal for the frontier, the draft beginning, "The line will start from a point on the Heri-Rud, a little to the north of Zulfikar, fixed so as to leave the Pass of Zulfikar to the Afghans," in keeping with which the Viceroy of India also wrote to the Ameer of Afghanistan, "Your Highness informed me that you attached much importance to Maruchak, Gulran, and the Zulfikar Passes. . . . Her Majesty's Government have determined to adopt a line of frontier which will leave the Heri-Rud at a point north of Zulfikar."

On May 12th, however, M. Lessar called at the Foreign Office, inquiring for a more exact definition of the "Zulfikar Pass," and asked that the line should be now fixed only as far as Hauz-i-Khan, and that from thence a line should be drawn, so as to form the southern limit of a zone of discussion, between Maruchak and Bala Murghab. To this it was agreed that "Zulfikar Pass" should mean the spot thus marked on the English maps, but Lord Kimberley could not agree to the new

demand about Maruchak. M. Lessar, therefore, nine days later, again saw Lord Granville, and explained that by "Zulfikar," used in the Russian despatch, he understood that the boundary line would start from a little to the north of the western opening of the Zulfikar Pass.

Upon this detail sundry despatches were exchanged, a change of Government taking place meanwhile in England, after which, on July 17th, 1885, Lord Salisbury, the new Minister, wrote to the Russian Ambassador, "I have learned with regret that the Russian Government are not prepared to agree that the whole of the Zulfikar Pass should be included in Afghan territory. . . . No reservation was made as to a portion of the pass being retained by Russia. . . . And Her Majesty's late Government, confiding in this engagement, declared to the Ameer that the Zulfikar Pass would be included in his dominions. Her Majesty's Government consider that they are bound by the declaration thus made, and they cannot but hold that the Russian Government is similarly bound."

To this, on 30th of July, M. de Giers wrote to Baron de Staal that, in their communication of 4/16 April, mention was made only of Zulfikar, and not of the pass. They were willing, however, to leave to Afghanistan what was important for strategical purposes, provided the communications between their own posts might be secured to Russia, concerning which they would be able to speak more definitely on receipt of surveys just finished by topographical officers on the spot.

This proposal was laid before Lord Dufferin in India, and Sir West Ridgeway on the spot, the latter of whom telegraphed, "The possession of the western defile would be sufficient for the Afghans"; but he suggested, considering topographical uncertainties, it be provided that the Russian frontier nowhere approach nearer than one thousand yards to the edge of the escarp of the western defile.

To this the Ambassador in London, at a meeting at the Foreign Office on September 4th, agreed at once, and on the 8th there was signed by Lord Salisbury and Baron de Staal a protocol which provided that a Commission should be appointed by each government, with an escort of one hundred men at most on either side; that the Commissioners should meet within two months from the signature of the protocol at Zulfikar, where also the delimitation should begin; and that, in tracing the frontier according to the protocol, the Commissioners should pay due attention to the localities, and to the necessities and well-being of the local populations.

DELIMITATION.

DIPLOMATIC negotiations being arranged thus far, the English Commissioner appointed was Sir J. West Ridgeway, assisted by Major Durand, and for the Russian Commissioner, Colonel Kuhlberg, chief of the topographical staff at Tiflis, assisted by Captain Guedeonoff, of the Russian Engineers, and chief astronomer. Each Commissioner was accompanied by a staff of officers, amongst whom was M. Lessar, a civil engineer, but who was attached as political adviser, the only *bond fide* "political," I am told, in the Russian camp, whilst on the British side were abundance of "politicals," but no recognized scientific officer.

The boundary line was to be drawn from the Heri-Rud to the Oxus across the hilly country, which bounds on the south the low flat deserts of Turkmenia, and was to begin at Zulfikar.

The right bank of the Heri-Rud, it should be remembered, is an elevated plateau pierced by two principal passes, the Garm-ab near Pul-i-Khatun, and the Zulfikar. At the latter (named after Zu-al-fakar, the sword of Muhammad) there is a ford, which gives a convenient means of crossing from Persia to reach the Herat valley. This ford was much used also, formerly, by the Turkoman raiders, in consequence of which Kilich Khan, the wise minister of Yar Muhammad, built here one of his towers to watch and check the incursions of the Tekke and Salor marauders on this threshold of Herat territory. The pass, when approached on the Afghan side, is four hundred yards wide, with precipitous sides rising from four to five hundred feet. It is from two to three miles long, and soon narrows, being at one point not more than thirty yards broad, where, the sides continuing precipitous, the place could be easily held by a few braves against a large force. The ravine with its two openings could easily be made practicable for artillery, but it does not appear to be of very great military importance.

The British Commission marched thither on the 9th of November, and the first unofficial visit of the Commissioners took place on the following day. Just two months had elapsed since the signing of the protocol, and a formal meeting of the Commissioners being held on the morning of the 11th, a good deal of work was got through at once. On the 12th the Commissioners rode out across the entrance to the Zulfikar Pass, and, going north under the great scarp that overshadows

the river from the east, they fixed upon a site for the first pillar of the Russo-Afghan boundary on the right bank of the Heri-Rud, at a point "about 8,500 feet distant from a small tower situated on a mound at the entrance of the Zulfikar Pass."

Work having thus fairly begun, all the English officers were invited by the Russian officers, on the evening of the 14th, to dinner. A building under the pass, probably a soldiers' guard-room originally, was metamorphosed into a dining saloon; the Cossacks joined outside in excellent part singing; and it is pleasant to learn that, notwithstanding the bad blood that had been stirred in England during the diplomatic negotiations, both Russians and English, on the scene of action, found themselves on a friendly social footing. Two days later a return dinner was given to the Russian Commission, whose welcome to the English camp was expressed in bonfires along their pathway. The pleasure of these meetings seems to have been genuine on both sides, the crowning act of hospitality and good will being first shown by the Cossacks, who seized an unfortunate English officer who had proposed their health, and, placing him on their outstretched arms, tossed him like a ball—that is, in "*podkeedovate*" fashion, as it is called in Siberia—the correct thing being to throw up the favoured guest till he touches the ceiling. How the men of the Bengal Lancers succeeded in imitating this custom of the Cossacks with one of the Russian officers is not recorded; but according to a Moscow newspaper they attempted it.

The work of delimitation was now taken up in earnest, and the first arrangement was that the Russian staff, being so strong in topographers, should undertake the topography of the "zone"; and that the three English survey officers should complete the triangulation of the district, and furnish the necessary basis for topography, by fixing sufficient points. Subsequently, however, the English surveyors had to take a part of the topography as well as all the triangulation. The survey parties started eastward on the 18th of November. Pillar No. 2 was placed on the top of the neighbouring rock commanding pillar No. 1. "From pillar No. 2 the frontier turns to the north for a distance of about half a mile as far as pillar No. 3, which is situated on an eminence at the western extremity of a detached portion of the cliff. From thence the frontier runs in a straight line towards the top of a steep hill about a mile and a half distant in an east-north-easterly direction, and reaches pillar No. 4, placed on a low mound in the plain." And so the work continued, and that without discussion, up to pillar No. 14, near

Sumba Karez. Beyond Sumba Karez the boundary line was so drawn by the Commissioners as to give to Ao-Ruhak and Islim, belonging to Afghanistan and Russia respectively, each their due share of grazing lands on both banks of the Egri-Geok, so as to prevent the chance of quarrels, if possible, by the too close contact of shepherds and flocks on either side.

The protocol directed that the line from Islim should follow "the crests of the hills which border the right bank of the Egri-Geok," leaving Chaman-i-bed outside of Afghanistan, and similarly following the right bank of the Kushk (into which the Egri-Geok runs) as far as Hauz-i-Khan.

On reaching Chaman-i-bed, the boundary line had extended eighty miles from Zulfikar, over uninhabited pastures. The only culturable land at Zulfikar lies south of the pass in the river valley, the greater portion of it being Persian. At Chaman-i-bed was reached the second strip of cultivated land, the valley of the Kushk being here, as at Zulfikar, entirely uninhabited. It is, moreover, only of late years that the Kushk valley has been tilled by the Panjdeh Turkomans; yet on this score the Russians claimed more than thirty miles of country southwards, up to within fifteen miles of Kushk itself. This claim (on the spot and at the time) was resisted, and the boundary was drawn some thirty miles north of the point the Russians wished to have.

The protocol directed, "From Hauz-i-Khan the frontier will follow an almost straight line to a point on the Murghab to the north of Maruchak." Accordingly the Commission left Hauz-i-Khan on 15th December, and marched down the Kushk valley to Kala-i-Maur, there being a good deal of water in the stream. From Kala-i-Maur the English marched more than twenty miles over a waterless waste of sandhills, rat-riddled and dangerous, to the Kashan stream, whilst the Russian Commission took a southerly road by the Robat-i-Kashan, and then, joining the English, the two marched to Maruchak on the Murghab.

Higher on this river, and about thirty miles to the south-east, is Bala Murghab, whilst twenty miles below Maruchak is Panjdeh. Panjdeh, which means five villages, is not a village at all, but a valley about twenty-five miles long and two wide, with *obas*, or collections of Turkoman tents. The nearest approach therein to a house is a low, flat-roofed mosque. The inhabitants belong for the most part to the Saryk tribe of Turkomans, whose fields and pastures were to be left outside Afghanistan. The water supply, cultivation, and pasturage

belonging to Panjdeh, however, were so mixed up with similar rights and property situated in the upper portion of the Kushk, Kashan, and Murghab streams, that to delimitate a frontier across these valleys was a work of very great difficulty, nor had the Commissioners been able to reconcile the conflicting Afghan and Russian claims, when the season warned the political staff into winter quarters, though the survey staff kept the field during the entire winter.

Up till now the weather had been warm and lovely, but at Maruchak winter came suddenly and without warning. On the 20th December the sun was bright and hot; on the 21st the wind went round to the north, clouds came up, and snow fell for three days, after which the weather was again lovely, but the cold intense, the minimum on December 24th being 2° below zero. On the 25th the English invited the Russians to their Christmas dinner, and on Boxing Day returned the visit to a Russian lunch, soon after which the British started for their winter camp at Char-Shambeh. From the 28th of December, 1885, to the following 7th of January, however, they were detained by bad weather at Karawal Khana.

During their winter stay of four months, those officers who chose to risk the cold had good sport within reach, two guns bringing home on the first afternoon fifty pheasants, afterwards seventy for the same two guns, and so on. Snipe and ducks were also to be had, but not easily, because of the mud, swamp, and canals to be traversed. Up till 11th February the weather continued very severe, the thermometer sometimes registering 40° of frost.

Meanwhile the Ameer had been communicated with concerning the claims of the Russians, and their desire to be allowed to construct a dam, if necessary, across the Murghab at a canal head, to which His Highness replied by a cordial acceptance of the frontier as far as settled, and gave permission for the construction of the dam, providing, however, that it was not be used for a bridge nor for locating there a Russian military post. This arrangement caused the frontier line to be brought to the left bank of the Murghab almost due west, instead of a point "to the north of" Maruchak, as in the protocol; but it was thought fair, if the Russians were to have Panjdeh, that they should hold the head of the canal on which its very existence depended.

The Afghan inhabitants of the country over which the boundary line had been drawn thus far were few in number. The first and second strips of cultivation have already been spoken of

as uninhabited, and the same remark holds good of the third cultivated area which the Commissioners reached thirty-seven miles north-east of Chaman-i-bed, in the valley of the Kashan. The Panjdeh Saryks merely cultivate the land, but do not reside thereon. Even the valley below Maruchak, for some fourteen miles to the north-east, is entirely uninhabited on the Afghan side. The nearest habitation on the right bank is at Karawal Khana, twelve miles south of Maruchak fort, whilst on the left bank there is no habitation southwards up to Bala Murghab.

On 12th March the Commissioners met again, and, two days later, the building of demarcation pillars had recommenced. The maps too were now complete up to the Oxus, towards which the protocol said, "the frontier will follow east of the Murghab a line north of the valley of the Kaisor, and west of the valley of the Ab-i-Andkhui, and leaving Andkhui to the east will run to Khoja Saleh on the Oxus." That is to say, the line of frontier was to take an easterly or north-easterly bearing, and the principle guiding the direction was to be the leaving to the districts of Kala Wali, Maimana and Andkhui, a belt of pasturage of an average breadth of from fifteen to twenty miles, whilst preserving to Russia certain wells with their adjacent pasturages, which form a line of communication over the Steppe to the Oxus; practically, therefore, a division of the pastures between the Russian line of wells and the Afghan line of rivers. This arrangement would cut off much pasture land from what had been considered Afghan territory. It was land, however, over which for many years it has been impossible for the Afghan Uzbeks to graze, except when the shepherds went, as they occasionally did, in strong bands for mutual protection; and as much land remained as of late years had been usefully and safely employed for pasturing the Uzbek flocks.

In carrying out the foregoing principle, difficulties awaited the Commissioners owing to the vague knowledge of the country possessed by the officers on both sides. The positions of pillars 1 to 19 were regarded as definitely settled, but the line from near Islim to pillar 35 on the Murghab, though indicated, was regarded as alterable. Pillar 36 was placed on the right bank of the Murghab, about three miles north of Maruchak fort, on a height commanding the river, whence the frontier was continued for about sixty miles eastward, when another difference of opinion arose.

The protocol provided, "The delimitation of the pastures

belonging to the respective populations will be left to the Commissioners. In the event of their not arriving at an understanding, this delimitation will be settled by the two Cabinets on the basis of the maps drawn up and signed by the Commissioners." An appeal, therefore, was made in the present instance to the home governments, which at first caused a flutter on the Exchange in St. Petersburg, but did not affect the friendly relations previously existing between the members of the Commissions, both of whom awaited in the valley of the Murghab the decision of their respective governments.

On the 17th of April the difficulties had not been surmounted, but the Commissioners met again; and when, by the 1st of May, the prospects of a settlement were improving, it was determined that the joint Commission should move onward. Owing to rainy weather the English Commissioner and political officers did not leave Char-Shambeh until the 7th of May, two days after which they arrived near Maimana. Here again the weather was very unsettled, and floods prevailed, with loss of life to the natives, one entire village of thirty families being destroyed near the British Commissioner's camp.

On the 13th of May the Commissioners arrived at Daulatabad, and on the 15th held a joint sitting, when the frontier was definitely fixed from the Murghab to within forty miles of the Oxus, on the meridian of the Dukchi wells, fifty miles north of Andkhui, for which last-named place the British Commissioners left Daulatabad on the 17th.

The Russians followed on the 18th, pitched their camp two miles from the town, where, a few days later, was held a parade of the British escort, in honour of the Queen's birthday.

From this place the joint Commission proceeded to the Oxus, and encamped between the Bosagha district of Bokhara and the Kham-i-ab district of Khoja Saleh. On the 12th of June, with the thermometer at more than 100° in the shade, the Commission commenced the survey of the left bank of the Amudaria, or Oxus, to Kilif, the Russians also surveying the right and left banks to Chushk Guzar. By the 18th the frontier had been traced and pillars erected to within thirty-five miles of the river, and no new question had been left unsettled, so that on the 20th of June, 1886, the Commission had practically finished its labours, except as to agreeing about the district of Khoja Saleh, a tract of thirty square miles of land, with 13,000 inhabitants, and producing a revenue of £1,500 a year. On this two or three pillars would need to be placed, but in the meanwhile so important was the matter regarded that its settlement was left

to the English and Russian Governments, and the members of the Commission went their ways, the British to India, and the Russians homeward.

It had been foreseen for several months that a difficulty would probably arise as to the exact point where the boundary should strike the Oxus. All the documents said "At Khoja Saleh." But where was Khoja Saleh? This name we know chiefly from the record of Alexander Burnes, who, in 1832, crossed the Oxus at such a place, thirty-three miles from Kilif. He made the passage in a ferry-boat drawn by swimming horses in fifteen minutes, and describes the river as half a mile across, and from seven to twenty feet deep. But no place on the river's bank, bearing such a name, is now to be found, the river having eroded the southern banks very considerably. There exists near the stream the shrine of a saint, called Ziarat-i-Khwaja Salor, which gives its name to the tract of country stretching about twenty-five miles along the river to Kham-i-ab, and known to the Afghans as Khwaja Salor or Khoja Saleh. The Russians, therefore, who had been made to abide by the letter rather than the spirit of the documents at Panjdeh, now desired the same for the English, and would have the frontier drawn to the seraï on the river, near the shrine known as Khoja Saleh.

On the other hand, the British Commission, after inquiry, came to the conclusion that a spot in the small district of Islam, some eight miles below the shrine, was the place intended by Burnes; but they desired that the boundary should be drawn between Kham-i-ab and Bosagha—that is, at the western limit of the district called Khoja Saleh.

Reasons urged in favour of this were, that the district is peopled entirely by Afghans and Afghan subjects, though some of the latter are Ersari Turkomans. They, however, are settled, and pay taxes regularly to Afghanistan. The district is unquestioned locally as part of Afghanistan, and forms a sub-division of the Akcha governorship, which, possessed by Shere Ali in 1873, was recognized by Russia as Afghan. Moreover, the British Commission discovered that, in 1873 or thereabouts, the local officials of Afghanistan and Bokhara respectively, marked their frontier between the border districts of Bosagha and Kham-i-ab, with which latter place the "Khodsha Salor" on the Russian staff map corresponds in latitude and longitude almost exactly. To cut off this district, therefore, in favour of Bokhara the British Commission felt would be to dispossess the Amcer of an integral part of Afghanistan.

And so the matter stood when Sir West Ridgeway went to St. Petersburg to argue with Privy Councillor Zinovieff. By 12th April it had been agreed that the affair should be settled by mutual concessions, and on 27th July, 1887, Sir West Ridgeway wrote to the Marquis of Salisbury, inclosing "the original protocol containing the settlement of the north-western frontier of Afghanistan," and explaining thus: "According to the London protocol of the 10th September, 1885, the valley of Panjdeh was ceded to Russia. It was at that time supposed by the British and Russian Governments that the Saryks were confined to that valley, while, in fact, those people had extended their cultivation into the side valleys of the Kushk and Kashan, where they had opened canals and reclaimed a considerable amount of land. Their sheep, too, exclusively enjoyed the pastures between the Kushk and Murghab.

"When the joint Commissioners reached the districts in question, and the true state of the case became known, the Russian Commissioner claimed that the Saryks should be left in possession of the lands. The letter of the London protocol was, however, clearly opposed to this claim, and the Saryks were accordingly ousted. . . .

"When the joint Commission reached the Oxus it was established that, if literal effect were given to the agreement of 1873, the district of Kham-i-ab, and perhaps nearly the whole Khoja Saleh district, would be severed from Afghanistan, and that, moreover, it would be necessary to divide between the inhabitants of those districts and the Uzbek inhabitants of Afghan Turkistan the pastures and wells which are enjoyed in common by both. Such a division would have been a difficult matter, attended with considerable hardship to both parties.

"It was after consideration of these facts that Her Majesty's Government authorized me to negotiate a settlement, according to which the Ameer should restore to the Saryks most of the lands of which they had been deprived between the Kushk and Murghab, in exchange for the withdrawal of the Russian claims to all the districts at present in the possession of the Afghans on the Oxus, and to the wells and pastures necessary for the prosperity of the Uzbeks of Afghan Turkistan."

Sir West added, "It will be seen that Russia has merely claimed the lands and canals necessary for her Saryk subjects, and that Kara Tapa, Chahil Dukhter, Torshekh,—the only possible sites for a cantonment within the lands once occupied by the Saryks,—have all been left within the Afghan frontier."

Subjoined was a statement of Afghan losses and gains by this present settlement, thus :—

	Restored by Afghans.	Conceded by Russians.
Number of sq. miles of cultivation	6½	26½
" " " " waste	818½*	707½
" " wells in waste	1	19
Population	Nil.	13,000
Revenue	Nil.	£1,400

By this rectification of frontier, the point nearest to Herat is eleven and a half miles nearer than by the first arrangement, but no outposts were placed on the Russian frontier, the troops being withdrawn from Panjdeh, and transferred to the Oxus in the direction of Khoja Saleh.

The news of the practical settlement of the negotiations was announced to the Marquis of Salisbury on the 22nd July, at 5.38 p.m., and laid before the Queen, whereupon on the next day Her Majesty's Government offered to the English Ambassador, Sir Robert Morier, and to Sir West Ridgeway their hearty congratulations on the successful result of their labours.

The result aforesaid, in its larger aspect, may of course be regarded in various ways. Primarily, it is to be noticed, Afghanistan now has a Northern boundary; and though some will tell us perhaps it is only an artificial one, and not a practical, recognizable, geographical or ethnographical feature: yet competent persons will allow that even a bad boundary is better than none at all. Moreover, among secondary results, there is first our improved relationship with the people of Afghanistan, who, seven years ago, cherished bitter hatred towards the English. Now they have suffered a detachment of British troops to pass through their country, and, finally, given the last of them an honourable reception in durbar at their capital of Kabul.

Another result of a more definite character has been attained in our vastly-increased information concerning Afghanistan, its resources, and people. British survey and intelligence officers have been all over the north of the country to the Oxus at Kilif, and beyond, as well as through all Eastern Khorasan. The Heri-Rud Valley has been explored northward and eastward; and so have the roads over the Hindu Kush. Every pass of the Paropamisus has been explored, the military topography of Herat examined, its defences strengthened, and all

* Of which only 14 are culturable.

the country mapped from the Paropamisus to Kandahar. Information has been gained also concerning the Afghan tribes, their history, numbers, revenue, taxes, fighting strength, customs, manners, and occupations, besides which special persons were told off for the study of the botany, natural history, and geology of the country. Specimens likewise have been collected and drawings and photographs taken.

As a set-off to this it must be recognized that Russia has been allowed to advance in some places from fifty to one hundred miles south of the Clarendon-Gortchakoff line, over territory, it is true, where Afghan authority was somewhat shadowy; but she has secured Panjdeh and the Murghab up to Maruchak, as well as the Kushk Valley, wherein is a road from Meshed, though no possible site seemingly for a cantonment. Nevertheless, this brings her lands to within about sixty miles of Herat, which she has it in her power to menace, by reason of her contiguity to the more fertile territory of Afghanistan. According to military opinion, an advance to be made in force across the new frontier must be directed in one of four lines: (1) from Sarakhs through Kungruali and Gulran; (2) from Merv and Panjdeh, by the Kushk Valley direct; (3) by the Murghab and Kalah Wali Valleys, *viâ* Maimana; (4) along the Oxus to Kerki or Kilif, and thence on Andkhui or Mazar-i-sherif. The *Chul*, or wilderness, is believed to be impassable at other parts, except for mounted bodies of small strength. As for an invasion of India through Afghanistan, it would seem that our dominions are most easily assailable, either by Herat and Candahar or through Mazar-i-sherif, Kunduz, or some town in Badakshan, and then over the passes of the Hindu Kush to Kabul. To oppose such an invasion it is said that Kandahar and Kabul should each be occupied by a force from India, and that, when the railway and telegraph connect India with Kabul and Kandahar, and unite also, if possible, the last-named places, we shall then be ready for an emergency.

Meanwhile Russia has extended her Trans-Caspian railway with celerity beyond Askhabad, through Baba Durmaz, to Dushak, 390 miles from the Caspian, but less than 250 miles in a straight line from Herat. In this direction it does not extend at present, but runs 260 miles north-east through Merv to the Oxus at Charjui, whence it is to continue another 230 miles to Samarkand,—a distance in all from the Caspian of 890 miles. Thus it will be seen that Russia has now connected her bases of operation in Central Asia to an advantage she

never enjoyed before. As to the continuation of the line southwards, it should be noticed that the distance from Dushak to the Afghan frontier is as far only as from London to Doncaster, or 3 hours' journey by express; and from the frontier to the Bolan Pass, where a line might join the network of Indian railways, is about 500 miles, or as far as from London to Aberdeen. There would be this difference, however, between making the Turkoman and Afghan lines, that in Afghanistan there exist few, if any, natural difficulties to be overcome, for population and water exist almost everywhere. What revolutions, apart from military considerations, the making such a line might bring about is not easy to foresee. It would halve the distance to our Indian Empire, perhaps change the mail route, and enable the ubiquitous British tourist to pass in ten or twelve days from the banks of the Thames to those of the Ganges.

DISCUSSION.

THUS far I have been detailing, for the most part, the words of others both better informed and more competent to speak than I. My endeavour has been to set before the reader the salient points of the Diplomacy on the Russo-Afghan Frontier, as gathered from the Blue Books on Central Asian Correspondence since 1872, together with a sketch of the Delimitation of the Frontier, as written by officers on the Commission, in the *London Times* and the *Pioneer of India*. All, therefore, that I can claim thus far is to have selected my material fairly, and as fully as space would allow. It should be remembered, however, that Blue Books only tell half the story, and deal only with the political side of it. They do not show the Afghan views, nor the delicate position the Indian Government was in throughout. They give only the main British and Russian outline, and naturally omit to point out that the Russians and English approached the subject of demarcation from entirely different points of view. The Russian Commission was a scientific one, and based its arguments on geographical and ethnographical principles, whereas the English made it a political question, and put into the field a great company of political officers.

I could be content here to stop, only that after thus reading on the subject and travelling in Turkmenia, I feel hardly justified in withholding my opinion from any who care to know it. But political writing is not at all my *forte*, and I shall not, therefore, attempt to express myself otherwise than in a homely and non-professional manner.

To look at the matter, then, from three points of view : if I were a Russian I can imagine myself addressing Mr. Bull thus :—

You English are a meddlesome lot. You have a long purse, and a fair daughter you call India, at whom if we poor Russians do but look, you immediately ask, like a watchful papa, what are our intentions. Of all peoples in the world you ought to be the last to charge others with earth-hunger. South of us you have added field to field and province to province, till you can look over the border at us, and profess to feel greatly alarmed that we should come near you from Turkistan.

To allay your apprehensions we intimated in the Gortchakoff circular of 1864 that our expansion in your direction had attained its limits. And so we thought it had ; but in course of time circumstances unexpectedly altered. It became necessary to chastise Khiva, without annexing, as we thought, more territory, and we told you of our plans. But we had overestimated the strength of our enemy, and descended upon his capital with three expeditions, any one of which would have sufficed for the siege. Germany had recently set the fashion of forcing the conquered to furnish an indemnity, and we thought Khiva might just as well pay our little bill. The Khan, however, had run away, and, like an ostrich, hid his head in the sand ; and when we reseatd him on his throne, he sat so limp that it was manifest we should never see the colour of his coins if we did not shore him up with Russian bayonets. Hence our building a fort, and annexing part of the right bank of the Oxus, which after all did not alarm so very dreadfully the natives, for they flocked over to live on our side in such numbers that some of them had to be restrained !

The feathers of England nevertheless were ruffled, and we were ominously warned not to come near Afghanistan, and to be very careful what we were about with Miss Merv ; to which we replied that the former was out of the question, and towards the latter we had "no intentions."

Next, Mr. Bull took upon himself to interfere in our private affairs with Miss Persia, and was not too well pleased at our asking him to mind his own business ; but when, contrary to all expectation, overtures were made to us by the said Miss Merv, the jealousy of England was still more perturbed, and required the frontier to be delimited at once.

Very well, said we ; and then England, now as much too fast as before she had been too slow, wanted to rush into the field at once. Rather than seem backward, we, in a weak moment, consented, but pointed out that an understanding should be

come to as to the principles whereon the delimitation should be made. Nor did we leave England quite in the dark as to what we wanted, for so early as July 1884, before preliminaries were settled, Sir Edward Thornton wrote home that he anticipated the possession of Panjdeh would be disputed, and that Russia's goal would be the Paropamisus. England, however, was out of patience just then, and in answer to our inquiry, whether the boundary should be ethnographical, geographical, or topographical, replied that they were sending their Commissioner, whose directions were to inquire what were the possessions of the Ameer. Hence the rules of the game were not properly determined, and we naturally asked what was the good of our kicking the ball without knowing whether we were to play "Rugby" or "Association." Hence, too, the obstinacy of our captain in declining to enter the field.

Meanwhile we warned you, "it is urgent that the Afghan authorities should be prevented from seeking to make encroachments"; that is to say, upon the territory or zone we intended to dispute, and which we proposed should be defined as to its limits. To this, however, you would not listen; but, like a big girl in a tiff, you telegraphed "the great disappointment of Her Majesty's Government at the postponement of General Zelenoy's departure." Well, of course our men on the field could not lose what they expected would be their ground, and they took up positions accordingly at Pul-i-Khatun and Pul-i-Khisti; and then, when they heard you were advancing, they naturally, in self-defence, were obliged to advance to Zulfikar and the Kushk, which latter you remember culminated in the Panjdeh fight. This brought Mr. Bull to his senses, and he condescended, first to name both a northern and southern line of discussion, and then to negotiate a frontier which was to be laid down as nearly to the protocol as local circumstances would allow.

This, Mr. Bull, was good, so far as diplomacy goes; but if you had thus come to terms at the outset, what a lot of trouble, not to say bloodshed, might have been saved! Further, what endless difficulties might have been avoided, had you acquired a little geographical knowledge before making protocols and defining "zones." It is hardly too much to say that nearly all our difficulties, delays, and disagreements have arisen from making "agreements" without even an elementary knowledge of the geography or ethnography of the localities dealt with.

As for the actual work of delimitation, the English officers were remarkably fine fellows, one of whom wrote that, "in dealing with us Russians they had to be very wide awake

indeed." This distention of the eye-lids, however, was needed not on one side only by reason of variations of English ideas, according to time and place, in interpreting documents according to the spirit or the letter.

The despatches had set forth all along that the frontier should continue "from Khoja Saleh to Sarakhs"; but, when it came to the point, nothing, it seemed, would please you but to go from Sarakhs to Khoja Saleh: a great mistake, as I fancy you found, through our operations being thereby lengthened, it is said, nearly a year! Then, again, when the Commission came to Panjdeh, where, according to the confession subsequently made by your own Commissioner, "Russia merely claimed the lands and canals necessary for her Saryk subjects," the letter of the protocol was held up to our face as "clearly opposed to this claim, and the Saryks were accordingly ousted." But when the Commission reached the Oxus, the "letter" had vanished into "spirit," and now England desired a new and liberal interpretation of "the post of the Khoja Saleh," which should bring the frontier not only to the spot which the Commissioners believed was intended by Burnes, but to the edge of the district named after Khoja Saleh. Hence we Russians are of opinion that we have been fully matched by English capability in looking after the interests of Number One. This, too, on our side was all the more trying because, whilst by the delimitation we had little to gain, England had next to nothing of her own to lose, though it must be confessed that in acting for Number Two—the Afghans—the difficulty of her game was considerably increased.

Regarding the matter now from a second point of view, an Englishman, having climbed the Himalayas, might look over Turkistan, and take up his parable thus:—

What in the world do you Russians mean by continually pushing in this direction from your frozen home in the north? It looks suspicious, more especially as the character of your ancestors, you know, was not conspicuous for neighbourly honesty. When, for instance, your Cossacks crossed the Urals and fought the Siberian hordes of the Irtish, Tobol, and Barabinski Tatars, though Ivan the Terrible did not send them, he patted them on the back when they brought him the plunder, and helped them to go and again do likewise. So, again, your Great Peter, when he heard of gold in Yarkand, ordered the Siberian authorities "to take a company of merchants . . . that skilled persons were to accompany them to purchase, or even to examine the gold, where it was found, and in what quantity,

also the roads leading thereto, and finally, even though it should be with difficulty, to seize that place."

Both these, surely, were instances of barefaced robbery in 1580 and 1720 respectively; and though to look back so far might bring to light blotches on a good many of our escutcheons, yet the mention of the latter date is useful to recall the origin of your forts on the Irtish.

About a century later you set your faces aggressively towards the south, and in less than thirty years pushed 600 miles below Semipolatsk to Vierny. Meanwhile, in the north-west, after subduing your former masters, the Tatars of Kasan, and receiving the submission of the Bashkirs, you found yourselves in contact with the roaming Kirghese, whose steppe Czar Peter recognized as "the key and gates to all the countries of Central Asia." Into that steppe you advanced from Orenburg, not always indeed without provocation, but receiving sometimes the submission of the tribes, the supposed protection of whom at length gave you a *casus belli* against the Khokandians. Their forts you attacked simultaneously on the Syr-daria and at Aulie-Ata, and so joined your forces from east and west, meeting at Chimkent. This brings us to 1864, when Prince Gortchakoff gave out that the long-desired frontier was attained, and that Russian expansion in Central Asia had reached its limit.

Vain words! Tashkend was speedily taken, and when, hostilities having ceased for a few months, the Governor-General of Orenburg arrived in Turkistan, smelling the fight from afar, and having come down to see the battle, he deemed it desirable to occupy the Bokhariot forts of Ura-Tiube and Jizakh; and this was followed in 1868 by your sending Cossacks to quiet border feuds and coolly to select a site for a Russian fortress near Samarkand. I mention this as a set-off to the Russian allegation that you were attacked by the Bokhariots; but when you put your fist into a man's face and shake it within two inches of his nose, would it not be marvellous if he did not resist, and can you wonder that we in England, seeing your continuance in fighting and annexing, desired to come to an understanding as to a frontier between us? We then agreed upon a boundary from Sir-i-kul to Khoja Saleh, to which, I am bound to say, in that direction you have fairly kept.

You soon gave us fresh cause for apprehension, however, not only by annexations from Khiva, but by unjustifiable encroachments on the south-eastern shore of the Caspian. It may be that your reconnoitring or other expeditions had been attacked by

the Turkomans ; but what business had you there at all ? And as for pillage suffered from them or their Kirghese cousins, why, for every rouble they took of your merchants you must, ere this, from them have taken ten ! Besides which, the remedy was always open to you which the Emir of Bokhara is said to have recommended to some of his merchants who complained to him that, when they went to a neighbouring kingdom, they were badly treated ; whereupon he replied, " Then don't go ! "

Against your annexation of Merv I have nothing to say, for from the outset I regarded the submission of the Mervis as a genuine affair ; but you can hardly be surprised that after this the English wished a more definite arrangement as to the frontiers of Persia and Afghanistan.

So far as the Persian part of the business is concerned, you have shilly-shallied a good deal, and do not appear to have done all that was desirable even yet ; whilst as for the Afghan frontier, though you accepted our suggestion quite readily, your action at the outset was not all that could be desired. Having acceded to the 13th October as a date for a meeting of the Commissioners, you ought in honour to have stuck to the agreement, though it were to your own hindrance. Nothing was said before the starting of our Commissioner about a zone of operations ; and for you to intimate that, until some arrangement were come to about the zone, your Commissioner " would probably remain at Tiflis " was most dishonourable. It was a naughty answer, too, you sent us on the 1st of April, that you would have your own line of discussion as proposed by you or none at all ! As for the Panjdeh fight, I know not whom to blame, whether you or the local Afghans ; but certainly the English and the Ameer did all in their power to keep the Afghans straight, according to the agreement. With regard to the Zulfikar Pass, if I taunt you with wriggling out of the letter of the correspondence, you will answer perhaps that you did your best to keep to the letter, and to keep us there too, at Khoja Saleh. Then, again, is there truth, or is there not, in the allegation that your proceedings were somewhat " grasping," and that our concessions brought out only new demands, made, seemingly, for the purpose of embarrassing us and causing a breach between England and Afghanistan rather than for the purpose sometimes even of gaining territory for yourselves ? I have not the facts before me, on which this allegation is founded, and so refrain from employing the odious epithet ; but let us hope, now you have secured nearly all you asked for, that we shall hear no more of annexation in Central Asia.

Turning lastly from both the Russian and English standpoint, and looking at the matter as one who desires not the aggrandisement of this or that empire, but the greatest happiness of mankind in general, and the people of Turkistan in particular, then one might say:—

Here are two great nations squabbling over a piece of territory that in itself is not worth the having, and which England desires for Afghanistan, only the better to keep Russia at a distance. So poor a sustenance does this region afford, that for ages its inhabitants have been thieves and brigands by profession, laying waste the Persian and Afghan borders, and carrying into captivity the inhabitants of whole villages, with their cattle. At this Mr. Bull looked on unconcernedly, and quietly smoked his pipe. What did it concern him though thousands and scores of thousands of Persia's wives and children were carried off to the lusts and bondage of the Turkomans, so long as "that horrid Russian" did not approach his dear daughter India? Hence, if Mr. Bull could have had his way, things would have been in their old condition still; and unless perchance there linger one or two of the bondsmen whom Sir Richard Shakespear liberated from Khiva with English gold half a century ago, not a single Persian slave would have us to thank for the sweets of liberty and protection. Some of my friends will think me a little severe upon you, Mr. Bull. But you know at heart I love you, and am never prouder of my Taurine descent than when among those Ursine Russians. Yet I cannot forget what Russia has done for Central Asia. Tens of thousands of slaves were liberated when her soldiers entered Khiva; and Turkoman raids are now a thing of the past. Where Russian rule is established in Turkistan a lady can safely travel alone on the post roads, which is more than can be said of certain parts under some governments even in Europe; whilst as for the Turkoman steppe, across which neither Russian, Khivan, nor Bokhariot could ensure me protection five years ago, it is now spanned by a railway and telegraph, which bring to the place some at least of the blessings of civilization.

Let England, then, be thankful that she has been delivered from a position wherein it is just possible she might have been compared to a dog in the manger, that would bring no good to the Turkoman herself, nor permit others to do so. Russia has gained little enough by the annexation of Merv, in comparison with the expenditure thereby entailed, unless we are to believe that ever-present fear in some minds that Russia is bent on

invading India, and that is a question upon which I offer no opinion. It is no scare to me, and I usually find that those who have travelled in Russia most, and know her best, suspect her least. Why, then, cannot England and Russia in Asia be friends?

But—enough of this style of writing, to which I have given rein on the last page or two, in order to afford some idea of the impression left on my mind after reading the question through. It is an easy style, such as the irresponsible journalist may adopt without much trouble, and perhaps with popularity, but which I regard as on a low stratum when compared with the language of the historian or the diplomatist. Two things have struck me in my late mild course of Blue-book reading: first, the immense advantage, to those who like to form their own opinions, of being able to read, not the garbled accounts and one-sided comments of this or that political organ; but the very words in full, of those who conduct our international affairs; and I have noticed and admired the care and thought, and never-failing courtesy with which, on both sides, these negotiations have been conducted. It has greatly increased, too, my respect for our statesmen and diplomatists, for I think England has reason to be proud of having in her midst men who bring such patriotism and culture to the service of their country.

I could wish, nevertheless, now that the matter is settled, that their pens may find occupation in another direction; for beneath the late negotiations is seen unmistakably here and there the tendency to war; and war does not make for the highest form of national prosperity. There are loftier types of greatness to be attained by following after the things that make for peace, and the loyal recognition, all round, of a simple precept of seven words, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," would have obviated the necessity for the whole paraphernalia of the Afghan Boundary Commission.

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PREFACE.

THE recent settlement of the Russo-Afghan Frontier question has suggested the present as a suitable time to meet a wish that has been expressed for a popular edition of my larger work on "Russian Central Asia, including Kuldja, Bokhara, Khiva, and Merv." It suggested also the desirability of adding an Appendix, showing the course of events and diplomatic correspondence which led to the appointment of the Afghan Boundary Commission, and of giving a sketch of the manner in which the delimitation had been performed. Upon inquiry at the libraries of the Royal Geographical Society and at the India Office for a compendium on the subject, I was told that no such summary existed. I have endeavoured, therefore, to make one from the Blue Books at the India Office, and from letters supplied, by officers on the Commission, to the *Times* of London and the *Pioneer of India*, some of the latter of which, up to the return of the major portion of the Indian escort, have appeared in "Travels with the Afghan Boundary Commission," by Lieut. A. C. Yate.

In condensing material and making extracts from the Blue Books on Central Asian Correspondence from 1872, I have been careful frequently to give dates or other clues whereby those who wish to examine matters more minutely can readily refer to the sources quoted; and I would take this opportunity to thank the officials at the India Office for their courtesy and readiness to afford me assistance.

The student and specialist who may desire further information concerning Central Asia generally, and not merely the ground over which I travelled, I venture to refer to my larger work of 1,500 pages, which gives 4,300 species of fauna and flora in about twenty lists with introductions, adds a bibliography of 700 titles, and treats more or less fully of the geography, economy and administration, ethnology, antiquities, history, meteorology, geology, zoology, and botany of all parts of Russian Turkistan, Kuldja, Bokhara, Khiva, and Turkmenia, down to the frontier of Afghanistan.

The present work is chiefly a personal narrative, many whole chapters, and most of the notes, of the large edition being omitted, except such as refer to patriarchal and Persian customs, which have been appreciated as throwing light upon Biblical ethnography.

Subsequently to the sheets being printed, or nearly so, my attention was called to a book entitled "In Russian and French Prisons," by P. Kropotkine, wherein my name figures as "a Foreigner on Russian Prisons," and my testimony is called in question. On reading the book I found that its chapters were for the most part reprints of articles which have appeared in the periodical press. They were before me, I believe, when I published, two years since, my chapter, "Do we know the Truth about Siberian Prisons?" but to this the author has not alluded in his recently published pages, so that I have merely to refer the reader to Chapters xx.—xxii. for my opinion on such prisons as I have visited throughout Russia.

H. L.

THE GROVE, BLACKHEATH, LONDON, S.E.
30th September, 1887.

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